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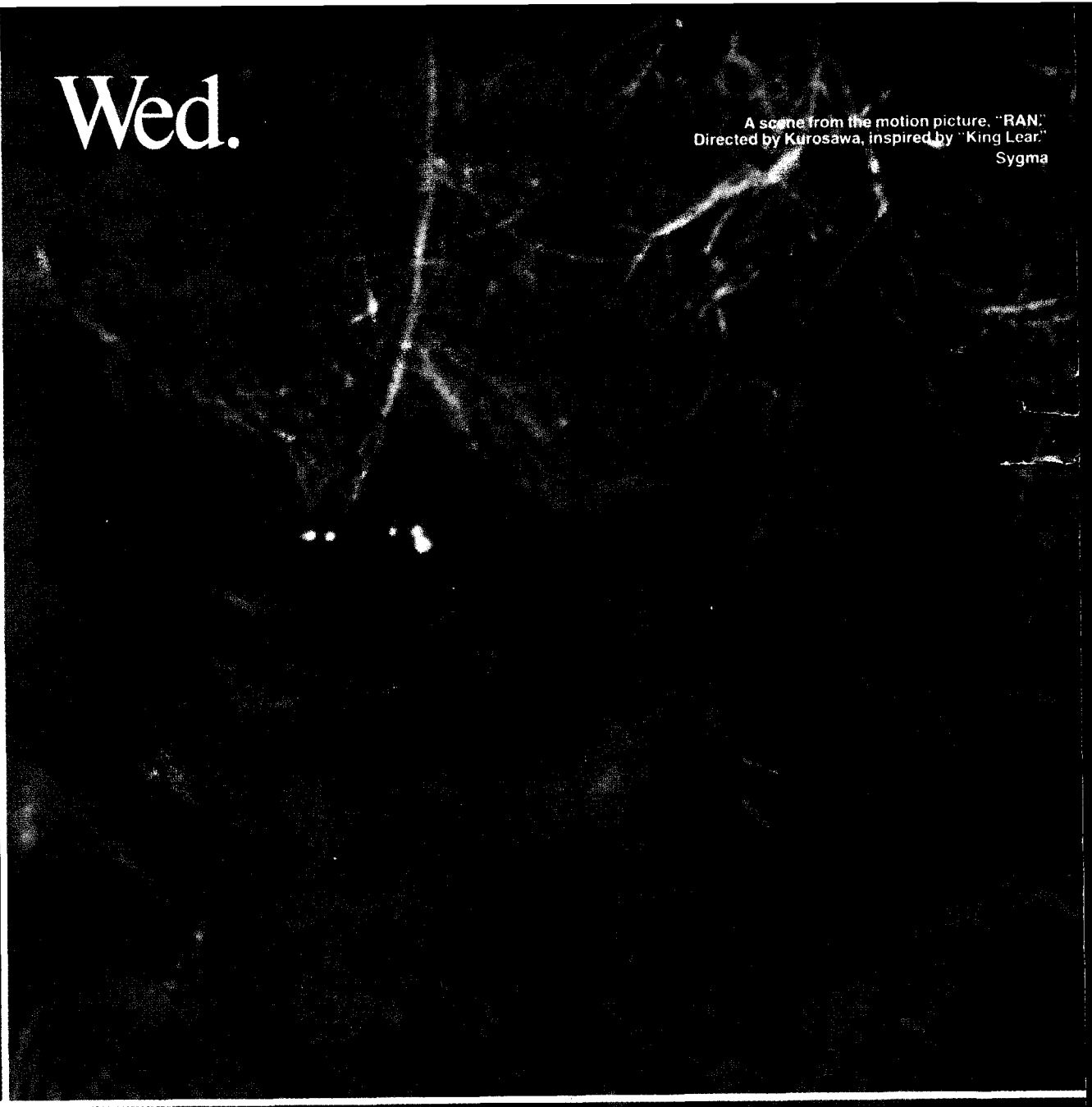

A scene from the motion picture, "RAN."
Directed by Kurosawa, inspired by "King Lear."
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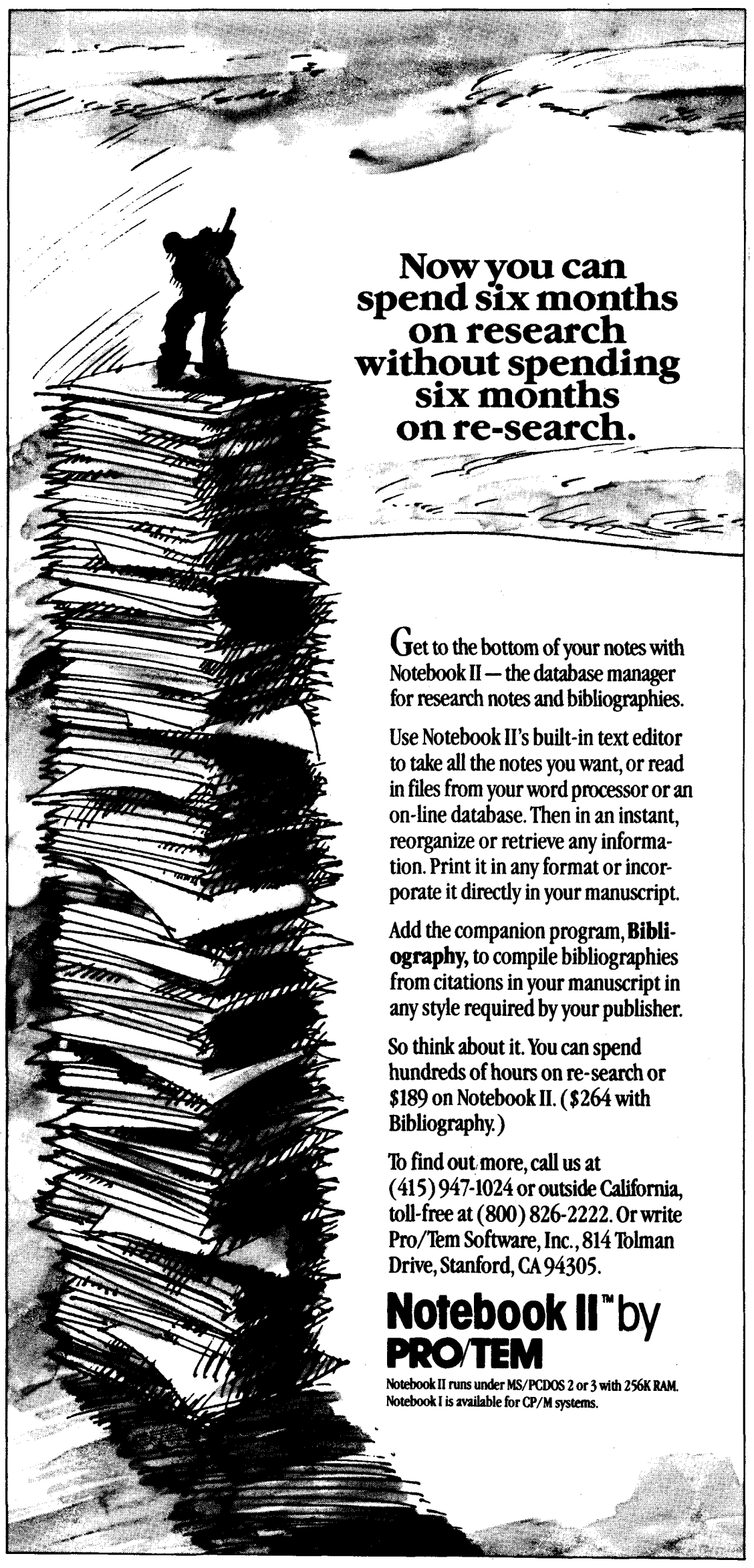
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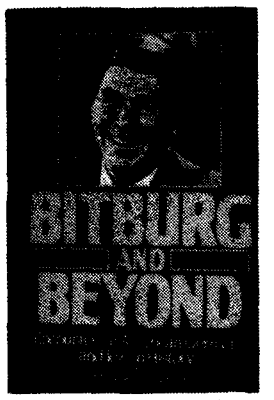
Political Dilemma or Political Harbinger



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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•February, and the Stock Market hit record highs. The government's index of leading economic indicators scored its largest gain in nearly four years, and a future Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist was arrested in St. Petersburg, Florida. Mr. Michael Conrow, 33, was arrested after police said they had found 370 stolen diapers at his home. He now stands accused of having taken possibly as many as 1500 dirty diapers from porches after posing as a driver for the Di-Dee Diaper Service. When arrested Mr. Conrow was wearing a disposable diaper. In Washington, letters, memorandums, and official documents continue to leak to the press; and all the natives wonder how long the furor can last.

•An ugly incident in Beckley, West Virginia, has added fuel to civil rights leaders' apprehensions that intolerance is rising in the Republic. In Beckley, heretofore adjudged one of West Virginia's most progressive communities, Mrs. Jeania Denny was set upon by a pack of vicious sixth graders when she showed up at Center Elementary School costumed as a "Care Bear" and hoping to enhance the Valentine's Day spirit at her son's school. Younger children merely "peeked into the eyeholes to see who was in there," Mrs. Denny informed local human relations authorities. However, the sixth graders' advances were of a more personal nature, and when Mrs. Denny resisted, "fists started coming at me." A hint as to how bizarre American politicking has become was provided when Senator Joseph Biden, the boy senator from Delaware, notified Iowans of his aspirations for the Democratic presidential nomination and added, "I want you to know that I do do windows and I will carry groceries." The month brought mixed news for Miss Joan Rivers, the talk show host. A Federal Drug Administration report concluded that a new drug for treating baldness is safe and effective. Unfortunately, it has been responsible for cases of a sexual dysfunction known as "exaggerated erection."

•In London Lord Avebury continues to lead a national debate over the most beneficent way possible to dispose of his remains on that unhappy day when he breathes his last. Americans have their political tempests; the British have his Lordship's valuable limbs. His vow to leave what remains of his corpse, once various laboratories have picked over its functional parts, to London's Battersea Dogs' Home "to give the doggies a good meal" was rejected by Battersea's authorities. Now the British peer has notified the *London Standard* that he could die confident that his remains would not be wasted if he were buried in the open sea where he might "enter the marine food chain." Another possibility would be to entomb him in the usual manner but to plant a tree above his grave which would "combine being biodegradable and the concept of a lasting memorial." His Lordship could also move to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Dr. Martin Spector has been accused of obtaining and selling human body parts in violation of Philadelphia's public health code. Syrian forces moved against Beirut's warring militias, but not before the spiritual leader of the Shiite Hezbollah ruled that Palestinians besieged in refugee camps could without fear of sin eat human flesh so long as it was that of bombardment victims. And in Washington, D.C., AIDS claimed the life of Mr. Ronald E. Rump. Mr. Andy Warhol also passed away after an unanticipated heart attack.

•In Michigan, state senator Jackie Vaughn III, a Detroit Democrat, reintroduced legislation to require public schools to teach "peace and human kindness." The bill was again met with spit balls and laughter, but Senator Vaughn is intrepid. In Jackson, Mississippi, state representative Will Green Poindexter, a Democrat from Inverness, faces equally dim prospects for his bill to permit dwarfs to hunt deer with crossbows during archery season. In our nation's capital Senator William Proxmire conferred his "Golden Fleece" award on the Agriculture Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) when he discovered that APHIS director Mr. Bert Hawkins had asked employees to compose an agency song "which will be sung on occasions both great and small . . . to remind us of the team spirit that guides us in our job of protecting U.S. agriculture." Senator Sam Nunn warned that any attempt to reinterpret the ABM treaty would provoke "a constitutional crisis of profound dimensions."

•Mr. Robert Gates, heretofore the deputy director of CIA, was nominated to succeed the gallant William J. Casey. Mr. Casey, who for six years has presided over the rebuilding of his agency and been President Reagan's soundest source of advice for keeping the government adult, was unable to resume his duties after the removal of a cancerous brain tumor impaired his ability to communicate. Former President Jimmy Carter heaved up pungent memories of the fruit-cake nature of the regime the Reaganites replaced when he sang to a rapt audience at Rice Institute for Policy Analysis that "I try not to be a racist and wouldn't call myself a racist, but I have feelings that border on it . . ." Possibly the glassy-eyed Wonder Boy of New Age Liberalism thought the Rice Institute had invited him for self-analysis rather than policy analysis, but on the basis of his statement it appears that Jimmy really is a racist. Christian though he is, Jimmy revealed that "It's hard for me to believe that one of those children [starving Africans], in the eyes of God, is as important as Amy." To those who believe that there never can be another imbecile like this in the White House, I submit the corpus delicti of young Senator Biden. Or how about the Hon. Richard A. Gephardt, who on February 23 declared his intention to be elected President of the United States by declaring war against Japan and South Korea—in fine, what in earlier times was boomed as the "yellow peril"?

•In Peking, political reform continued as the official New China News Agency announced that 15 million rats (*Rattus rattus*) had been exterminated in the capital alone. In Moscow, Mr. Yuri Churbanov, the late Mr. Leonid Brezhnev's fat son-in-law, has been spirited away to the hoosegow, another proof of Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev's Good Government campaign. Back in the United States, a 20-year-old student at Lawrence, Kansas's Haskell Indian Junior College was rushed to Lawrence Memorial Hospital after he injected himself with chicken soup and became hallucinatory. Catholic church-goers began weeks of indoctrination into the economic imbecility and malice of their bishops when parish priests began obligato discourses on the bishops' pastoral harangue against capitalism, and in Lagos, Nigeria, beggars voted to reject small coins from alms-givers as a protest against the government's devaluation.

•In the Philippines the Aquino Administration celebrated its first anniversary with volleys of small arms fire. U.S. sanctions against Poland were withdrawn as quietly as possible. Australia's Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who in 1954 set a world beer-drinking record by washing two and a half pints of the bubbly stuff across his esophagus in 12 seconds, announced plans to become that country's first Labourite to serve three terms as prime minister. And this journal's 1979 recommendation that women's lingerie be sent to the sacred city of Qum to subvert the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's numinous regime has apparently been picked up by the West German government working through Mr. Rudi Carrell, putatively a comedian on Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Mr. Carrell's joke, however, elicited complaints of such heat from the Iranian galoots that the Bonn government has actually apologized, and all of Mr. Carrell's future jokes about ladies' unmentionables will presumably be directed at Great Britain's House of Lords.

•February was, by tacit consent, condom month in the United States; all enlightened eminences sang praise of the wondrous device, which was first experimented with in the 1640s when an unknown Englishman rummaging through the bowels of a cow first noted the thinness of the animal's large intestine and how if duly sealed at one end it would prevent the exchange of bodily fluids during coitus. The Good News has been spreading ever since, and early in the month the Rev. Carl

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F. Thitchener, 54, of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst, New York, distributed modern condoms during a church service while the Associated Press took pictures. The Rev. Thitchener's other accomplishments include, according to UPI, a 1958 indecent exposure charge, a 1982 streaking incident in the presence of a corps of Livingston County, New York Brownies, and at least two drunk driving charges. All of which suggest that the time has come for developing a condom to cover one's entire body.

Finally it appears that former California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., is preparing to join Senator Biden and Congressman Gephardt in the Democratic presidential race. He has been studying Zen Buddhism in Japan for five months and has developed "techniques of concentration" that allow him to speak in complete sentences, some of which have two coherent clauses. Perhaps this explains New York Governor Mario Cuomo's mysterious withdrawal from presidential contention on February 19.—*RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Elmer Fudge

What has prompted you to change your name at the height of your career (*TAS*, February 1987)? It may be true, as Joseph Epstein says, that R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. "represents a distinct case . . . of cognominal overload," but does R. Elmer really solve the problem, and isn't it a bit late, in any case?

—Aaron Haspel V
New York, New York

Back in 1888, your great-grandfather Elmer Tyrrell married a girl named Mary Emmett, daughter of a prominent Copperhead politician, Randolph Emmett, of Greencastle, Indiana. Randolph had a great deal of money, mostly extorted from the residents of Utah during his sojourn there as Chief Justice of the Utah Territory, appointed by President Buchanan.

Successive generations descending from Elmer and Mary were careful to use the name "Randolph Emmett" for their children, in hopes that the great man might bestow more than their fair share of his fortune on them when he died. Unfortunately, however, shortly after your father came along, the great Randolph Emmett finally died, and bequeathed all his money to the ASPCA, leaving his descendants only a rich knowledge of, and fascination with, polygamy.

You were so named because your father believed himself to be the greatest man on earth, and felt the infant would be honored to live in his shadow.

Meanwhile, your great uncle Elmer Tyrrell, Jr. (Elmer Senior thought he was the greatest man on earth, too), ran off to a far country where he took a non-white wife, and was never mentioned again by the rest of the family . . . *until* his grandson, also named "Elmer Tyrrell," developed a unique formula for manufacturing glue from cow horns, while working in a rendering plant at Sioux City, Iowa.

History has a way of repeating itself, and sure enough, this Elmer Tyrrell became patriarch of the famed Elmer's Glue Company, and rich enough to have avaricious relatives naming their children after him.

Opportunist that you are, you sprinted to the Arlington courthouse recently and changed your name from Randolph Emmett to Randolph Elmer Tyrrell, in an attempt to ingratiate yourself with this distant cousin, who is reported to be manipulating many others in the family, as well.

Does this win your contest?

—Lawrence B. Hughes
Marshall, Michigan

You have wronged Madonna. Madonna, you may remember, is the author of that curt and cryptic letter in the February issue reading, "Saluto R. Emmett, Scortaris te, Vale." By transposing Madonna's order (deliberately? probably) you have turned a beautifully classic message into ungrammatical gibberish. It should run, "R. Emmett, te saluto. Scortaris! Vale." Which is to say, "Hi, Emmett. I hear you've been running around with hookers. So long, M."

I must say I'm surprised. Can this be the reason you've changed your name to Elmer? Oportet te paenitere.

—John M. Duff
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

General Westmoreland on Dan Burt

I found Ben Stein's article, "Free to Libel," in the February 1987 issue of *The American Spectator*, impressive and agree with its argumentation. However, I take issue with the expressed myth that I was betrayed by my lawyer, Dan Burt.

My attorney did not betray me. Near the end of the trial, I weighed with Mr. Burt my chances with the jury and decided to accept a settlement after the judge imposed an inordinately high burden of proof on my attorney before a jury dealing with matters unfamiliar to them. Further, I was disillusioned by the large number of low level, narrowly focused witnesses for the defense who were allowed to present to the jury, in the context "state of mind," hearsay evidence. *—W. C. Westmoreland*
Charleston, South Carolina

Send Me No Flowers

I write to correct some inaccuracies, not of fact, but of implication, in Fred Barnes's review of my *Why We Lost the ERA* (*TAS*, February 1987).

Take the following passage, literally correct, in which Barnes writes that I describe Phyllis Schlafly as moving, in his words, "the argument from one over equal rights to one centered on the practical effects the amendment might have, such as requiring combat duty by women and weakening the family. 'Once opponents turned public attention to the amendment's effects, they were already on their way to winning.' Mansbridge says." Some readers might take away from Barnes's two sentences, which slide almost imperceptibly from "effects the amendment might have" to "the amendment's effects," the idea that I thought the ERA would require combat duty by women and weaken the family. In fact, I argued that the ERA would have done neither. I devoted two chapters in my short book to explaining why the ERA would not have required sending women draftees into combat. Why? Because I thought the story of how people—both for and against the ERA—came, incorrectly, to think the ERA would have this effect shows how our "adversary" politics tends to distort our understandings of reality.

Take another example: "Mansbridge insists that homemakers weren't merely fantasizing when they concluded that both the ERA and the women's movement were not out to aid them." The sentence is, again, literally correct. But it implies, and subsequent sentences seem to confirm the implication, that the ERA would hurt homemakers. In fact, I spent most of one chapter spelling out how the ERA would affect homemakers. (It would encourage, for example, the feminist legal theory that the homemaker makes an equal contribution to the marriage. This new doctrine, which states with a state ERA have been more likely to adopt than those without, helps combat the pernicious effects of no-fault divorce laws—which, incidentally, no feminist organization ever supported and which feminist scholarship has shown is more likely to hurt women than to help them.) I conclude that for homemakers the ERA "would have had little short-term impact after 1976." Its effects would have been almost entirely indirect, as a mandate "encouraging" attention to the admittedly subtle problems of women when most political, economic, and even social power is held by men. As with draftees in combat, the real story I have to tell here is how and why some of the public came to see the ERA as having an effect that it would not in fact have had.

Finally, I do not argue that the ERA "lost fair and square." In the unratified state legislatures, where the ERA had to win only seven more votes, 80 percent of the women legislators favored the ERA, compared to only 40 percent of the men. But less than 15 percent of these legislators were women. Was that fair and square?

I do point out that right was not always on the side of the ERA movement. Anti-feminists were often telling us important things that we needed to hear. We should have listened more carefully to opponents' worries about the amendment's effects and respected more deeply the kinds of truth those worries reflected. The practice of adversary politics makes listening to one's "opponents" difficult.

Yet the underlying willingness to listen to women in the feminist movement has surfaced dramatically in the enthusiastic reception my book has received from one feminist reviewer after another, even though the book is quite critical not only of our strategy but of our entire stance. The response of feminists to my book, along with much of my earlier experience, bespeaks a women's movement very different in fact from the movement the media sometimes conveys, and that Mr. Barnes too implies with his perhaps not carefully chosen words, "hysterical" and "feminist screeds."

—Jane Mansbridge
Professor of Political Science
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

Fred Barnes replies:

Okay, okay, I get the drift. With friends like me and *TAS*, Jane Mansbridge doesn't need any enemies. Even I can imagine the embarrassment she must have felt as a committed feminist upon reading a rave review in a conservative sheet. Must have been tough explaining that one to her friends. Anyway,

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EDITORIALS

VAPORIZERS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Ours is a very curious political culture. The author Garry Wills heaves up a fantasy on the life of Ronald Reagan, *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home*, wherein not one paragraph is exempt from inaccuracy, and he is acclaimed a "philosopher." Well, I suppose he is. Not in the sense that Plato or Aristotle were philosophers, but in the modern sense of the philosopher, that is to say, the thinker who gathers up facts and vaporizes them into a lovely dithyramb of pompous carping.

Some vague purpose is served here, but by the time all the painful intellection has been perpetrated, who knows what that purpose might be? Wills's immediate purpose is to render Ronald Reagan unseemly, but the arduous erudition and argumentation that he lugs onto center stage suggest that he has set his sights on the immensities: a world without flags, the salvation of man, a Bill of Rights for laboratory animals. Who knows? By the time Dr. Wills had typed out his last sophistic paragraph I am sure even he was woozy as to what he had wrought other than an urgent need to confront his bartender—and quick. Once again the philosopher has befuddled himself.

This sort of idiot philosophizing goes on all the time. Certainly many of the opponents of the Strategic Defense Initiative, or Star Wars, find themselves so engaged. All are ardent opponents of nuclear holocaust. They have marshalled stupendous evidence and analyses to sink SDI into mortal doubt. In the end their fears of nuclear holocaust are replaced by dread of a shield against it. In all the decades of the nuclear age only SDI has offered a plausible alternative to nuclear nightmare, but SDI's critics have become philosophers along with Dr. Wills. In matters of security they trust in the Politburo's promises rather than in the promise of American technology.

From that day in 1983 when the President first suggested SDI research these critics have been busily gathering up the facts and vaporizing them, turning the Soviets' vast SDI research and deployment programs into no programs, their vast arms buildup into no buildup, their violations of the 1972 ABM treaty into nothing at all.

Truth be known, the Soviets have spent $150 billion on SDI research and testing over the past ten years, fifteen times more than the United States. They have deployed a combination of ABMs and air defenses that give them at least a light shield for the entire Soviet Union. Their arms buildup has been equally prodigious. The Central Intelligence Agency's 1985 National Intelligence Estimate, 11-3-885, reveals that this buildup may have ended the nuclear stalemate that SDI's critics prefer to the assured security of strategic defense. According to that NIE assessment, the Soviet warhead arsenal has grown from 6,000 in 1978 to 12,000 in 1985 and will reach 20,000 by 1990. Finally, the Soviet's breaches of their ABM obligations extend the gamut from tricky questions of missile capacity to the blatancy of their Krasnoyarsk radar.

All this and more has no objective reality for the critics. Nor does the fact that SDI answers their oft-repeated hopes for peace. Through advanced technologies our strategic defenses and eventually our entire nation will be secured from nuclear holocaust. Neither a Soviet strike nor the assault of some Third World fanatic as yet unknown will menace us. In an age in which scientific advance is looked to to resolve such diverse problems as AIDS and sluggish productivity, SDI's critics have abandoned all hope that science might save us from nuclear missiles. It is a curious flight from their usual faith in science. Only the malign influence of politics can explain it. Had SDI been thumped for originally by the left rather than by the right, one can imagine all true-blue progressives coming out for it lustily and all true-blue conservatives viewing it with the utmost suspicion—such is the gruesome condition of our politics.

According to SDI strategists such as Robert Jastrow, the United States has perhaps five years to shield itself from the Soviet combination of offensive weaponry and strategic defenses. Within that time such diverse sources as the Pentagon and deliberative groups convened by the George C. Marshall Institute argue that a defense of several layers can be constructed to protect our deterrent force and parts of our population. The hour for doing so is now. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

MY PAL CHURKIN

Impatience is as fundamental to the genius of America as optimism. And so as Mikhail S. Gorbachev announces to the comrades, as he did before the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on January 27, that "we have begun reorganization and will not look back . . ." Americans of every stripe begin to fidget. Mr. Gorbachev has begun perfuming his addresses with such words as "reform," "participation," and "democratization." Steadily our impatience grows: "Get on with it, Mr. Gorbachev." A few more speeches and there will be Americans calling for joint U.S.-Soviet maneuvers against Chile.

Even I have become expectant, and imagine my anticipation when a Washington television station invited me to participate in a discussion of the ABC drama "Amerika" with Mr. Vitaly Churkin, the youthful First Secretary at the Soviet Embassy. He was being beamed in to our studio from his office. Miffed by ABC's fictional portrayal of America after a Soviet takeover, Mr. Churkin was responding with brief appearances on television stations all over the country. For my part I wanted to experience the new

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Soviet openness and candor for myself, and, of course, soothe any hurt feelings Mr. Churkin might harbor from ABC's infelicitous depiction of his country.

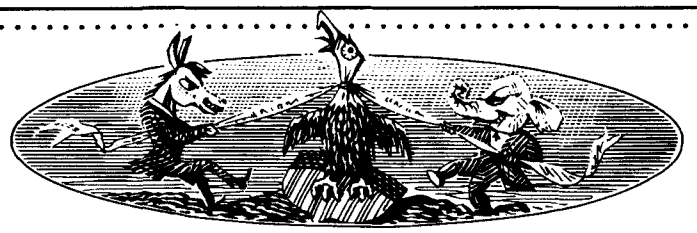
After all, the series' basic message is merely that totalitarian regimes are ghastly. Nuclear war is only the most public fear of our time. The other great fear is the death of our freedoms. Those countries enthralled by totalitarianism are grim places, worlds apart from the freedom and prosperity of America. Nazism, the second great totalitarianism of this century, endures nowhere today. Communism does. Hence for dramatic purposes, if for no other, it is plausible that an America oppressed by totalitarianism would be dominated by Soviet totalitarianism as are so many countries in Eastern Europe, the Baltic, and elsewhere. The Soviet state-owned film industry frequently portrays America as an evil place, and by taking considerable liberties with the truth. Surely a suave Soviet diplomat would accept "Amerika" philosophically. After all, Soviet transgressions against the freedoms of others are not merely theoretical.

Well, I was in error. The First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy did not even pause to say hello. Coolly, fluently, but with the delicacy of an invading army, Mr. Churkin came on. Within minutes his barrage of distortions, fantasies, and threats made it clear that if the Soviets really are going to change we shall all have to remain patient. In the meantime, in any discussion with representatives of the Soviet government Americans will have to wade through propaganda and abuse.

According to Mr. Churkin, ABC is a tool of "cultural fascism." "Amerika" is a "crude" attempt to "take the thoughts of Americans from their real problems: the threats of nuclear war and the many other economic, social, and other ills" of America. "Amerika" was an attempt "to fan hatred" and "instill negative thoughts in American minds" about the Soviet Union. If ABC were bound by history's record, "it would have made a documentary about the American invasion of Russia complete with tortures and concentration camps." He could launch this whopper because Americans "have little knowledge about Russia." As as-

(continued on page 52)

CAPITOL IDEAS



FESTIVE FOOLERY

by Tom Bethell

The great condom hullaballoo suggests that AIDS is perceived as a greater threat to the sexual revolution than to the health of America. If the disease's spread is indeed so alarming, why doesn't *someone* in the mainstream media urge that we practice sexual abstinence before marriage, and monogamy within it? Sure that would constitute an endorsement of Christian morality. Sure it would give aid and comfort to Jerry Falwell & Co. But look folks, the message is that we've got a real crisis on our hands. So let's throw *everything* at the disease, including the most effective of all barriers to its transmission—abstinence. We don't have to consent to Christian morality in order to take advantage of its utility.

But we can't have that, can we? That would be terribly unprogressive—giving up all those hard-won '60s "gains" against conventional morality. Better to preserve the sexual revolution and reduce its risks with condoms than to run the even greater risk of subordinating it to Christian practice. How long before Christian dogma itself would be back . . . ?

Such were my thoughts on February 16, when I opened the *Stanford Daily* and read the front page headline: "Campus Launching Condom Week."

As part of National Condom Week at Stanford, the AIDS Education Project will distribute 500 packets of condoms today and tomorrow in White Plaza [centrally located on campus] between 11 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Each packet contains eight brands of condoms, among them "exotic pink and black condoms from Japan, smooth and ribbed condoms, and a condom with Tahiti colors," according to senior Meg Richman. Students will be asked to rate the condoms according to color, size, shape, texture and taste.

The rating forms are due to be returned Friday, and those interested could know by next Monday which condoms Stanford students like best, according to Richman.

That's mouth-taste, not good/bad taste.

White Plaza is only a short distance from the Hoover Institution, so I went to take a look. The first thing I saw was a table set up with a big sign reading: STANFORD SAFE SEX KITS.

Safe? Only a couple of days earlier I had read in the *New York Times* ("Facts, Theories and Myths on the Spread of AIDS") that "condoms are not foolproof. . . . In one study two cases were documented in which the virus passed between partners who used condoms over an extended period."

You would have thought with the "torts," or liability explosion, Stanford would be more cautious about lending its name to the distribution of "safe sex kits" on campus. What if a student came down with AIDS after using one? Might he not be in a position to sue?

I was handed a safe sex kit. It contained seven condoms and a mauve brochure reading:

YES, WE ARE SERIOUS

The purpose of this first annual condom extravaganza is to provide an opportunity for you to sample the many different types of condoms currently available. We want you to have safe hot sex that is also healthy sex. Given the risks out there (unwanted pregnancy and incurable sexually transmitted diseases) we want to help you develop an erotic sex life that at the same time displays responsible, safe and healthy behavior between you and your partners. [Note the plural.]

The Great Condom Rating Contest is brought to you by the Condom Promotion Campaign of the Stanford AIDS Education Project—P.O. Box 8265, Stanford, CA 94305.

I spoke to Ken Ruebush, 22, a senior and German Studies major who is coordinator of the Stanford AIDS Education Project.

"I see education as the only means of preventing this tragedy," he said. "We don't have a medical solution."

How about abstinence?

"I think that people are basically sexual entities," he said. "I don't think it makes sense and I don't think people will follow that advice." (They certainly won't if society no longer has the courage to give it.)

"Abstinence is 100 percent effective but not 100 percent realistic," said Meg Richman, a senior from Los Angeles, who was also handing out kits.

Are they not promoting promiscuity in the guise of "safe sex"?

"Give him the shoe analogy," said Daniel Bau, a junior. "Giving out condoms promotes sex is like saying giving out shoes promotes walking."

Ruebush said he had been accused of giving the equivalent of sterile needles to addicts. "If we had a big drug problem on campus," he said, "I would be in favor of giving sterile needles to addicts."

Notice, incidentally, that in the case of drug addiction the Media Message, formerly "controlled use," has been toughened up: "Say no!" Likewise millions of anonymous alcoholics believe that the freedom of the will is not an outmoded idea. So do addicted cigarette smokers who try to quit. Only when it comes to sex is the suggested exercise of willpower derogated as an inappropriate application of moral principle to bodily function.

As for Acquired Addiction Syndrome—the idea that abandoning oneself to sexual temptation only increases the addiction—it belongs in the growing category of Thoughts that are Forbidden in Our Day. But it tends to be particularly true of unnatural forms of sex and explains why homosexuals often have so many partners. They have yielded to temptation so many times that the fires of lust burn within them, making it indeed difficult for them to control themselves. They are sex-addicts, and some (e.g., those who go to "Courage" meetings,

Tom Bethell is a visiting media fellow at the Hoover Institution and The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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analogous to AA) wish they weren't.

"Sex is not a medical problem to begin with," Ken Ruebush told me. (Nor was smoking. Nor was cocaine.) "People have to make their own decisions whether sex is morally wrong for them." (It would be interesting to make a list of those topics at Stanford that are denied the standing of moral relativity—apartheid, for example. And increasingly—smoking.)

Ruebush said that the Great Condom Rating Contest was really "just a gimmick to get the word out—a way of de-stigmatizing condoms."

In fact what we are seeing is the subtle use of ridicule to disarm shame. At (U.C.) Berkeley there were "five events," including a "Water-filled Condom Throw." (Incidentally, who organized this simultaneous, nationwide campaign—"seven days of serious educational efforts and festive foolery" at "scores of colleges," as the *New York Times* put it?)

Even before AIDS was known Eric Hoffer, the longshoreman philosopher, told me in San Francisco that what worried him was the breakdown of shame among homosexuals. It would end in disaster, he said. "There cannot be civilized living without shame." Now we are in the midst of a further assault on the natural barriers of modesty, in the guise of "festive foolery."

"I've had friends who died of AIDS," Ruebush told me in White Plaza. I asked him how many people in the Stanford community had the disease.

"At least 20," he said. "And that is a figure I heard nine months ago."

According to the *Stanford Daily* of October 6, 1986, "between seven and ten cases of AIDS in Stanford students have been reported" to the dean's office. I was informed by three people that two doctors at the Stanford Medical School have died of AIDS. Bob Beyers, director of the Stanford News Service, reported in October, 1985, that at least ten members of the Stanford community (including three faculty members) had at that time been diagnosed with AIDS. He told me that "it would not be possible to give you exact figures," because typically what happens is that students are likely to "withdraw from the community and die elsewhere."

Ruebush said the same thing—students with AIDS go away to die. (Like wounded animals—the image comes unbidden.) He suggested that I talk to Dr. Paul Walters, for four years the director of the Student Health Center.

"You're going to have trouble getting those numbers," Dr. Walters said, when I asked him for the AIDS figures.

Any particular reason?

"Well, the number is small enough that people are concerned about the confidentiality."

"Ken Ruebush said at least 20."

"Did he."

"You neither confirm nor deny?"

"I wouldn't."

"Wouldn't you say it's of some interest for the Student Health Center to know how much AIDS there is or has been on campus?"

"That's not a question to ask me."

"Obviously it *is* of interest."

"Whether we're going to discuss it is another matter," he said, chuckling lightly, as though confident of victory in this particular fencing match. "This is a highly sensitive matter."

"I was told two Stanford doctors died of AIDS."

Dr. Walters would neither confirm nor deny.

Meg Richman told me that the AIDS Education Project is an outgrowth of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance at Stanford (GLAS). "It was extraordinarily useful that we were able to work with GLAS in educating the community," Dean of Student Affairs James Lyons said a few months ago. "Stanford was very fortunate in having a well-organized gay and lesbian

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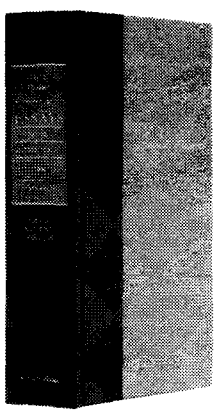

ESSAYS
MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY

By David Hume
Edited by Eugene F. Miller

Hume published his first book of essays in 1741 and never stopped working in one way or another on essays until his death in 1776.

This Liberty*Classics* edition contains the thirty-nine essays which were included under the title *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* in the 1777 posthumous edition of *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. It also includes ten essays which were withdrawn or left unpublished by Hume for various reasons. The two most important were deemed too controversial for the religious climate of his time.

The present volume contains all of Hume's essays on political economy and on government including such well known titles as "Of the Original Contract," "That Politics May be Reduced to a Science." "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," and "Idea of Perfect Commonwealth."

Professor Miller has based this new edition on the edition of 1777 and has held fidelity to that text as a paramount aim. He has added editorial notes to explain Hume's many references and allusions which would be unfamiliar to most modern readers. A glossary is provided to clarify 18th Century uses of terms which might otherwise prove confusing. A listing of variant readings is also included.

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community when the [AIDS] phenomenon hit us."

The role that the Gay and Lesbian Alliance has played on campus may be gauged by the invitation they extended in March, 1984, to a once-imprisoned Dutch parliamentarian and pederast named Edward Brongersma to speak on campus. He told an audience of fifty that sexual relations between adults and children should be permitted by law, "provided the child consents." For example, he said, sex between a 30-year-old man and a seven-year-old boy would be fine. "If we see sex and lust as a good thing," he told the Stanford audience, "I don't see why we should separate it as a category apart from other things."

Only a few weeks later university president Donald Kennedy spoke at ceremonies for the 10th Annual Gay and Lesbian Awareness Week. "I'm very glad to be here," he said. He was president of the *whole* university, not just part of it. "I'm grateful for what a lot of the people in this room have done for this university," he continued. "In a general way, you've provided all kinds of services and intellectual enlightenment to this place."

Does pedophilia fall into the category of intellectuál enlightenment? For all I know it does. I do know that if a racist were invited to speak on campus the group that invited him would be in trouble with the University administration.

In May, 1986, according to an engraved invitation sent to guests, "The Gay and Lesbian Faculty, Staff and Provost James N. Rosse, request the honor of your presence at a reception celebrating the sixteenth anniversary of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance at Stanford," the reception to be held at "Avocado Grove, Humanities and Sciences, Inner Quad Building I."

Nine months later Rosse is acting president (with Kennedy on sabbatical). Rosse was in late January reported to be "very surprised" when he learned that the death of Earth Sciences Dean Allan Cox was being investigated by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department as a possible suicide. He had ridden his bicycle into a tree, a day or two earlier having been told of a pending criminal complaint of child molestation against him. The *Stanford Daily* reported:

> The father of the alleged molestation victim studied for his doctorate under Cox at Stanford, according to a report yesterday in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The parents reportedly said Cox had sexual contact with their 14-year-old son when the family was living on the Peninsula, and claimed that Cox had been sexually involved with the now 19-year-old since then.

None of this came out in the *New York Times* expurgated obituary of Cox, nor in the lengthy *Los Angeles Times* puff piece on Stanford, heralding the university's $1.1 billion centennial fund-raising drive.

Perhaps acting president Rosse would have been less surprised if he had attended the GLAS-sponsored talk by the pedophile Dutchman. Was Cox present?

All of this would seem to raise questions about the responsibility, indeed the sanity, of the current Stanford University administration. Just imagine if anything comparable could be imputed to Hoover Institution Director W. Glenn Campbell, whose every statement is subjected to obsessive scrutiny for signs of conservatism. On the day when Stanford students were rating condoms for "taste," the *Stanford Daily* reported as a front-page, above-the-fold story: "The Faculty Senate will consider tomorrow a motion to censure Hoover Institution Director W. Glenn Campbell for claiming that the location of the Reagan library on campus allows the University to 'boast' of its 'Reagan connection.' "

The censure motion passed unanimously.

Physicians, heal thyselves. □

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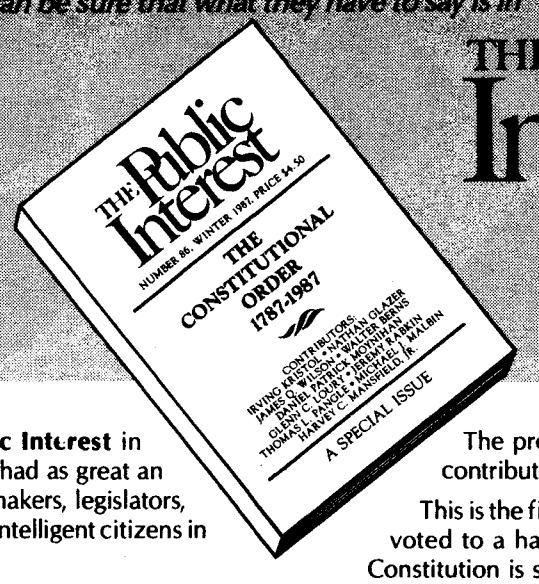

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Aaron Wildavsky, with a reply by James David Barber

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? REAGAN, IRAN, AND THE PRESIDENCY

An exchange between two distinguished political scientists, sparked by a pair of op-ed pieces by Mr. Barber last fall.

Dear Dave,

In our local paper I read that the President is easily led. Insofar as we know, the Secretaries of State and Defense were opposed to this Iranian venture while the Attorney General and the Director of Intelligence were in favor. At a minimum, the President had to choose among advisers. But we have other evidence on other matters. When David Stockman tried to get the President to raise taxes, the director of the budget failed over and over and over again. Indeed, when the economists of the nation were lined up insisting that the President abandon his most important policy, he consistently and persistently refused. Over a wide range of issues, I think the accusation does not stand up.

Is the President, as you and so many others say, "disengaged"? I just wrote a lengthy chapter about the major tax reform recently passed. The same charge surfaced there. But it was utterly false. Without Reagan, there is no reform. If he lifts a pinky, it is a nonstarter. If he fails to campaign for it, or to give support in Congress, it dies. True, he does not deal with "details," having Darman and Baker to do that for him, but at every strategic step, without which there would be no reform—insisting on revenue neutrality, trading higher effective taxes on business for lower individual rates—Ronald Reagan was the creative force.

Is there, then, more than one Reagan? Probably. The President is famous for paring his agenda down to the minimal essentials. In a system loaded against leadership, I think Reagan is right. In any event, Presidents who acted otherwise have not, by and large, fared too well.

Repeatedly we are told that there is something terribly wrong with the chief of staff system in the White House. Are we to conclude from this accusation that the problem was that everything had to go through a single person? Or are we to conclude that the chief of staff was not strong enough because this matter apparently did not go through him? As all students of the subject know, but are strangely reluctant to say now in regard to this episode, there is no ideal mode of organization that fits all people or Presidents or that guarantees good results or the avoidance of basic errors in all situations. Were we to take a more dispassionate view, difficult as that appears to be, we would say that Presidents should choose advisory systems that both suit their own needs and that will give them better results over the largest number of instances. Should we say that an advisory system that falls down badly in one case is to be scrapped even though it served this President well over a larger number of cases? Building on success—eight years as governor, six years as President—the President evidently had confidence not only in what he was doing but in the advisory system that was helping him do it. What critics must show is that this system is flawed over a large number of instances and not merely that it fell down in a particular one. But even here, sticking strictly to Iran for the moment, critics cannot show even that much. Surely the dissenters did not lack weight within the Administration. So what went wrong?

Why might a President feel it desirable to override his Secretaries of State and Defense? Either the President had failed to override them before, to his regret, or, more likely, he had done so before, when horrible consequences were predicted, only to discover that things turned out all right. Perhaps the invasion of Grenada, the bombing of Libya, and the Strategic Defense Initiative fit that mold. The reaction to SDI tells us something else that is well to keep in mind; those who ridiculed it (and Ronald Reagan, who gave it life) have had to recognize it has had far greater value than they, in their sense of superiority, ever imagined. So if it is true that the President saw a value in the Iranian venture that turned out to be illusory, it is also true that his critics have been similarly mistaken and arguably on matters of much greater magnitude.

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How did the President and his NSC staff get sucked ever deeper into this morass? Easy! It happens all the time, and not only to Presidents. The objectives one has in mind are both long- and short-run, general and concrete. How often have students of policy observed that the long-run and general (Iran after Khomeini) often give way to the short-run and specific (the hostages)? Aphorisms abound: "The measurable drive out the more important but impalpable."

The incremental illusion is also common. Which of us has not discovered himself swearing he would put only so much effort or money or trust into a venture only to go further and further on the grounds, sometimes valid, usually not, that doing a bit more would bring home the grand prize?

I do not say this to absolve the President. He is a professional politician and public official responsible for his actions. My point, rather, is that the errors in regard to Iran are not extraordinary, revealing of exceptional incapacity, but of the garden variety by which the high and mighty, as well as the rest of us, are brought low.

It is said that we had a teflon President who either mesmerized the public with nonsense syllables or was apparently so charming that nothing could stick to him. Now we know better. A reasonable conclusion would be that when the President speaks sense to the people they go along with him, and when he appears to speak nonsense,

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whether this is about the Daniloff swap or the Iranian swap of arms for hostages, the people reject what they are being told. The flipside of the coin is that the President was apparently making sense to the people before, but I hear very little about this. I am pleased to confirm that our people have a reasonable sense of discrimination.

The failure in Iran is political. The President undertook an action that, when it became known, would be rejected by the vast majority of the citizenry as well as political elites. By me too. For this political failure there has been substantial political punishment. The Iran policy has been reversed, the NSC has been reorganized, and the President's popularity has plummeted. Since the President lives by his deep intuition of the American public, it is not inappropriate that he should suffer when this insight leaves him. But I do not think you make a case that the President's personality or organizational apparatus is fatally flawed. Indeed, one could imagine, reading your columns and those of many other people, that the ideal President, the one who knew everything about most things, and who was a great detail man, was none other than the nationally beloved Jimmy Carter.

You write that Reagan is obviously not a man in charge: ". . . in the face of his own revelations that he did not know what his National Security Council was up to regarding the most sensitive area of his entire foreign policy." This is overheated; moreover, it appears to be wrong. What would you say of our relations with the Soviet Union or with the NATO nations or with Japan if Iran is "the most sensitive area"? You write further that "major military moves were undertaken without even the obviously appropriate deliberations." On the contrary, the evidence we have reveals that the internal deliberations were appropriate and that all the major players had their opportunity to say their piece. The NSC was involved. And the military significance of the arms shipments was small. While I am not among those who think readily of moderates in the Iranian administration, a dispassionate observer would point out that the Israelis, who are known for hard-headed thinking, and who are certainly in touch with the minute facts regarding these matters, thought this a good idea.

Therefore, I believe that the charge of triviality and nonsensicalness does not carry weight. Indeed, this episode has all the hallmarks of classical planning. What the President thought he was doing was not allowing events to take their course, not allowing the market of international relations to dictate what would happen, not merely reacting to events. Rather, believing he would save the nation much greater difficulty should the Iranian regime collapse and Communist elements take over, the President wished to anticipate this danger by taking preemptive action. Must he always be right? Do we say this is bad judgment and pass on to the next matter? Or do we go on, as you do, to claim a fatal flaw?

You mention Reykjavik as an example of "chaos at the top." I don't agree. I think of it as "creative ferment," potentially the most creative of the Reagan Administration. After all, we did not have lightweights there; the best our government has to offer, Paul Nitze, was there along with other knowledgeable and talented individuals. Since I think that near-zero nuclear disarmament holds out the best hope for us, I cannot join you in rejecting the President's instincts to try at least to do the most helpful thing as compared with the paltry prospects for traditional arms control measures. Senator Nunn's criticism is mind-boggling. Apparently we left our European allies out on a limb by giving them only twelve years to create sufficient conventional force. If there must be agreement on everything before agreement on anything, I leave you to assess the prospects.

You speak of ". . . wild risk taking by Reagan executives." There is in fact no evidence of this, at least none that you or others have provided. On the contrary, the history of the Reagan Administration thus far is one of extraordinary caution, the sole exceptions being Grenada (which I approved) and Lebanon (which I didn't). Can you say that you thought that when Ronald Reagan became President you would be in the seventh year of his presidency and have only to report these two minor military ventures?

You gloss over the profound differences between the Reagan Administration and the Democratic Congress on what our foreign policy ought to be. When there is such agreement, as in regard to the Philippines, then you do find them working together. But when there is utter dissensus, as in Central America, one finds quite the opposite. Indeed, what you are actually urging, given the disposition of opinion in Congress, is that the President not do what congressmen dislike, which would give him no foreign policy at all. Do you teach your students that Presidents and Congresses agree on who has the power to do what? Scholarship suggests not only perennial disagreement about the division of power but also that conflict over who is constitutionally empowered to act is part and parcel of disputes over what kind of action should be undertaken. Far from failing to perform its representative functions, Congresses may well have exceeded them by tying the President's hands in so many ways that they create additional incentives not to have themselves informed.

Evidently, the degree of trust necessary to make the intelligence committees work has been damaged, if not lost. Whether this trust had previously eroded, I do not know. But when informing others becomes the equivalent of being unable to undertake a policy, the stage for distrust is already set.

It seems to me that you are setting up the President so he cannot come out well.

I agree with your other article that "Human Rights Violations Continue to Spread Throughout the World." But I do not agree with your apocalyptic statements about the decline of Mother Nature, at least not in the developed countries, which do a lot better job at taking care of their patrimony than the others. Nor do I think that the odds of nuclear war have greatly increased from what they have been for a very long time. It is true that the United States, like so many other nations, finds itself in the midst of vast economic change that it neither fully comprehends nor can quite figure out how to cope with. But why do you want to lay this on Ronald Reagan? Or is he responsible for AIDS too?

At the moment, the economy is doing fairly well and aircraft accidents are at an all-time low. Yet I keep hearing portents of disaster. If things go badly, as with Iran, then bad times are here. But if they go well, doom is around the corner. It seems to me that you are setting up the President so he cannot come out well.

The demand for total harmony between words and deeds is understandable, but it will not withstand the slightest serious scrutiny. Did Congress agree in advance to Roosevelt's destroyer deal or was that not in fact, or could it not have been interpreted to be, a violation of the Neutrality Act? Or would he never send our boys to war? Recently I have been working with a graduate student on early American Presidents from Washington through Lincoln. Washington felt he had to appear to act much more forcefully than he actually could; Jefferson had to pretend to be doing nothing while doing a great deal; and Lincoln left virtually the entire panoply of domestic economic policy, including vast and far-reaching measures, such as the first introduction of an income tax, entirely to Congress, refusing to get involved in the slightest way. None of them had an easy time with Congress on foreign policy.

I have said nothing about the diversion of funds because sufficient facts are not yet evident. Evidently we cannot countenance illegality. Especially not in the White House. Why, then, is this operation located there? Obviously, the more such operations are located outside the executive office, especially the inner sanctum of the White House, the easier it is for the President to disavow them. Obviously, self-protection is not the main thing in the President's mind. One possible reason is that there were now so many restrictions, restrictions that would not have applied in earlier times, that the operation could not have been run elsewhere. Like you, I think this was a strong sign it ought not to have been done. But I remind you that in the past the President had triumphed by going against his main advisers. I will wait for further information before making up my mind on the President's part, if any, direct or indirect, in the funds transfer.

Should Reagan have known about the diversion of funds to the contras? Presumably, Presidents are not expected to know about everything, in fact most things, going on in government. How about the White House? There are dozens, hundreds even, of top people. How could (and, I would add, why should) a President know what they are doing in fulfilling an agreed purpose, subject to a presidential Finding? Surely the time spent in surveillance of associates, aside from its denigration of their loyalty, would be a waste of presidential time. How much less likely, then, would an unauthorized action, such as fund diversion, come to presidential attention? I read that Zbigniew Brzezinski, as NSC head, read over forms describing what the fifty or so people reporting to him were doing every day. Yet, if an action were left out, how would he have known? Of course, one can trivialize the matter by saying that Presidents should know about all illegal actions. But how and, more importantly, at what cost?

A major reason we have security leaks, I think, is that we classify far too many things and require clearances for far too many people. The result is that surveillance is inevitably diffused. How much worse it would be for chief executives to follow their people around (or have them followed). Or should the President have tapped their phones?

It used to be that good executives

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were those who gave their subordinates the freedom to make mistakes, who encouraged them to make creative improvisations, subject only to general guidelines. Certainly these are the conditions under which you and I would like to work. Subordinates who require detailed supervision are not worth having. Why, then, do we hear that the White House should be full of people constantly reporting to the chief, looking back to see who is gaining on them? Such a system would stultify every White House, not merely that of the incumbent President.

There is nothing wrong with (and much to be said in favor of) delegation so long as it works. If it breaks down, however, is one better off shoring it up or engaging in detailed supervision? As an observer of a wide range of policies, I think that broad delegation does work for this President most of the time, and that is all one can ask of any procedure. But why would the President give so much leeway to a mere lieutenant colonel? Because this is America, where strict adherence to hierarchy is not the norm, we escape the sclerosis that affects gerontocracies.

There is an awful lot of absolutist talk going around as if people were purely good or evil or actions were either all of one thing or all of another. The President thought of arms for hostages as a partial retreat from a policy that otherwise stood in force. Indeed, the Administration could presumably have undertaken large-scale weapons shipments and that would not have been the same as the amount of arms that were actually sent. If a little is the same as a lot, we lose an important sense of discrimination. Similarly, if any violation is the same as the grossest violation, I cannot think of any President, or of any human being, who could make the grade.

The President thought he was acting in the national interest. Others may not know but you as a scholar do know how often Presidents, even our greatest (Jefferson and Lincoln come immediately to mind), disavowed adherence to strict canons of legality in order to preserve the essence of liberty. The latest *This Constitution* cites Jefferson's justification for condoning serious extra-legal action done to curtail Aaron Burr's activities: "To lose our country by scrupulous adherence to written law would be to lose the law itself with life, liberty, and property . . . thus absurdly sacrificing the ends to the means." Of course, Jefferson may well have been mistaken, as I think President Reagan was this time. But as my mind searches for parallels, I am less inclined to be censorious.

Since the President lives by his deep intuition of the American public, it is not inappropriate that he should suffer when this insight leaves him.

Why would anyone want to pay attention to commentators like us or like anyone else? Presumably we would bring a knowledge in depth, calling on the experience of previous presidencies, yet that is exactly what is missing or we would be spared all this nonsense (and narcissism) about how we are uniquely put upon, as if Presidents have never acted on their own, or as if the only parallel was with Richard Nixon. Alternatively, commentators could provide analysis in breadth comparing the Iran affair with other contemporary instances of executive power. This is not done, I fear, because it would show that ours is a teapot among tempests. Whatever happened to the Greenpeace affair in which a life was taken? Is it likely the French Premier and President did not know? I believe the French operatives have left New Zealand for a mess of pottage or, more accurately, a piece of the lamb import quota. Can the current premier of Israel, when he was head of its Mossad, not have known of the killing of a terrorist? Oh, well, these countries may like intrigue more than we do. What of the *Belgrano* affair in which a boatload of Argentinians were shot out of the water and where responsibility can never quite be determined? Or the stories about the efforts of MI5 to destabilize the Wilson Labour government? Now there is a serious matter; that must be why it cannot quite make it past a weekend in the British media. Our mythical analyst would undoubtedly advise that there are indeed problems with secret services that cannot quite be done without and yet are difficult to keep compatible with democratic life. We should hope, however, this analyst would observe that these other democratic nations are pro-leadership systems, prone to explain away rather than condemn, prone to make allowances for the demands of office, whereas the support for leadership in these United States is wafer-thin. While this analysis does not excuse, it does make explicable the self-flagellation for what, in a comparative or historical sense, so far as we know now, is pretty small potatoes.

You and I are fact-mongers; while we claim to know that the context in which we put them is all important, people like us have an unfortunate tendency to look down on others who do not know so many essentially trivial facts and who like to get their information orally rather than in written form. It is easy, and I think mistaken, to disparage people whose form of intelligence differs from ours. In sum, I still don't think that the short-answer theory of the presidency—he who scores highest would be best—is the right one.

The other day on the radio, I heard a local congresswoman, Barbara Boxer, say that Congress must act to assure that no illegality ever occurs again in the White House. One way to do this would be to strip the White House of all the accretions it has developed in past decades. Need I remind you, as a student of the presidency, that most of these units have been put there at the insistence of Congress, including, as I recall, the NSC? What have liberals (who think of themselves as the party of positive government) to gain by weakening what our colleague Nelson Polsby has called The Presidential Branch? Soon enough, calls for presidential action will be heard. And who will there be to respond? The anti-third term amendment already creates unnecessary pressure to speed up action so as to shoehorn events into the last years. The only way to assure that an institution will do no harm is to render it powerless. Hamstringing our common heritage, the presidency, is not, I think, a worthy legacy.

American hostages obviously create problems for our people and politicians . . . from Korea to Vietnam to Daniloff in the USSR to Iran. If they are really prisoners of undeclared wars, why do the media keep building up their importance? Surely this visibility, as President Carter discovered, highlights the impotence of the Administration. If the government is then not allowed to do what is required to get them back—ransom them or invade the offending nation or take hostages of our own—why are their families given so much publicity, thus suggesting action ought to be taken? Though no one intends to do so, the result is to condemn Presidents either for weakness or recklessness (poor Jimmy Carter got it both ways). When one reads in the funny papers that the President either is lying or ignorant, the same effect is secured: whatever we find out, he is damned.

Did the President ship arms to Iran to free hostages, or to intervene in its internal affairs? Since it must be one or the other, we are told, he is deceiving us whichever way he chooses to explain his behavior. In the normal course of events, we speak of motives invariably being mixed; we also know that they are retrospectively rationalized to suit our future behavior. Yet here we persist in setting up a procrustean category—at once too short and too long—so the President is condemned whichever one he chooses.

I am impressed, as you can tell, with how many things we used to believe about administration, the presidency, foreign policy, human behavior (and more) that we go against when Presidents we do not like on wholly other grounds are involved.

You say that the people and the press have been too easy on this President's

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grievous faults. False charge, I reply. The only difference between now and before, unless one is utterly insensitive to barrage after barrage of criticism, is that this time the charges stuck. As usual, the implications run two ways: the charges were unbelievable before but in this instance they are believable. What should be done?

The policies have been reversed, the NSC reformed, a high political price exacted. What more? The congressional mantra—we've always done it this way—does not move me. Between the President's review panel, the special prosecutor, and Congress, a joint committee would have been more than enough. Endless hearings have begun to fray everyone's nerves; they are a lousy way to get information; and the public interest in getting the facts could well be served by three rather than four investigations. But there may yet be worse to come.

What you are actually urging, given the disposition of opinion in Congress, is that the President not do what congressmen dislike, which would give him no foreign policy at all.

Watergate in its time was properly regarded as an aberration. Another effort to impeach or to force a President to resign, thus reversing the result of the election without recourse to the people, would create a crisis of legitimacy. Conservatives would conclude that they could not rely on the ballot box not merely to elect but to keep the people's choice in the White House. We should not exchange a small temporary problem for a large permanent one.

Evidently, it is easier to say what should not be done—make this case a capital crime—than to say what should be done. Absent something splendid to do beyond what has been done, with each cure far worse than the disease, we have our negative clue: adopt the policy version of the Hippocratic oath: Do no harm. "Iranamok" should not become a historical designation for how we made a bad situation much worse.

What should President Reagan do? He has taken full responsibility without admitting that the Iran policy was wrong. My policy design was good, he keeps saying, but its execution was flawed. This will not do. Suppose we were to devise a plan to make the Soviet Union forever peaceful; alas, the only hitch would be that this requires destroying its population. Would we say, then, that the policy objective was great but its implementation left something to be desired? No, ends cannot be separated from the means required to accomplish them. Hence the policy, the means and ends taken together, is wrong.

I would like to join in the great American sweepstakes over what the President should tell the people that would get him off the hook once and for all. One thing and nothing. I say "nothing" partly because he has done and said most of what can be done and said, partly because anything he says will be interpreted unfavorably by some, and partly because he cannot be conclusive about the contra affair. How does one prove a negative? Observation of contested cases reveals that neutral observers of the same incident often give clashing accounts. If the President says he did not approve or know of the diversion of funds to the contras, and someone else says he did, how will we be the wiser? Yet I still think the President should say what the American people believe, knowing also that they believe him to be human, i.e., flawed, desiring to serve his country, yet capable of error.

An apologetic (cringing, Uriah Heepish) President would hardly be believable or followable in the future. The people I know don't like to be taken for fools. Why, they want to know, did the President say one thing about hostages (no deal) and do another? The President has to admit that, though he didn't start out to make a swap, he understands that is what his Administration ended up doing and looking to its people like it was doing. The President does not have to apologize for being human; he has only to reaffirm his identification with the rest of us Americans by acknowledging that we-the-people had good reason to feel there was a hostage swap, even as he felt there wasn't. If this sounds like Alphonse and Gaston (a President and a people groping toward mutual understanding) or Abbott and Costello (whose misunderstanding came first?), that is exactly what gives this episode its farce-like appearance.

Opinion polls reveal not only a decline in support for the President but a corresponding loss in esteem by the media. Is the messenger being blamed for the bad news? Perhaps. A more powerful explanation, I suspect, is that denigration of one major national institution exacts a price by a loss of trust in others. The most powerful explanation for the public lashing out in two directions simultaneously is that people feel they have been let down twice, once by their President trading with the enemy, and again by the media taking so much pleasure in it. At long last, many in the media appear to be saying, everything we have been trying to tell you dim-witted, slow-learning boobus Americanus all along—your President is an idiot—is now confirmed. As you revile him, praise us, for we knew it all along. And will you, my friend, justly famed as a student of political psychology, looking in the mirror, deny the element of pleasure, even glee, at Reagan's fall from grace? You (plural) are trying to have it both ways; we-the-media did not hit Ronald Reagan hard enough early enough and we told you so.

I think the people are sending a dual message: Don't do it again, Mr. President, and, Ms. and Mr. Media, don't report it again and again and again. The President has taken the pledge but others who should, have not.

—Aaron Wildavsky

James David Barber replies:

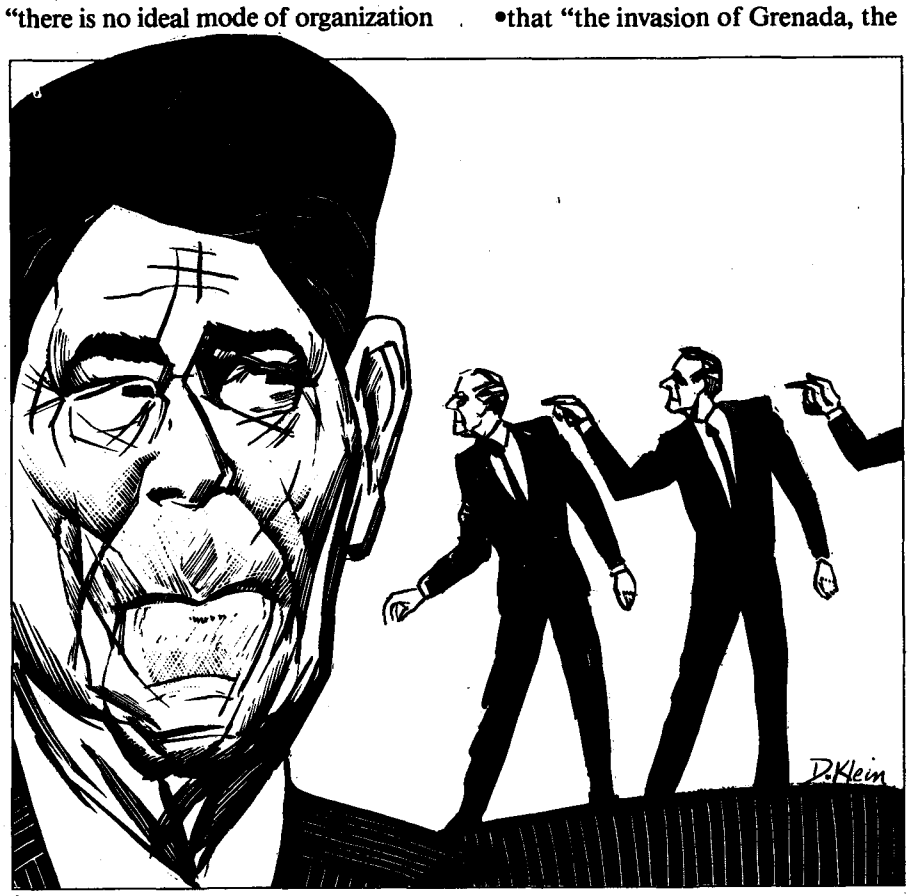
Dear Aaron,

I'm glad to get your commentary about the Reagan/Iran business. It feels like a pretty speedy expression of thoughts you have been mulling for some time, so it may be some of our differences are merely literary angle problems, as when I call the Middle East "the most sensitive area" of Reagan's foreign policy and you think I mean most important. I try to use language fairly precisely, so I have no trouble at all pledging allegiance to many of your statements, such as that "there is no ideal mode of organization that fits all people or Presidents or that guarantees good results or the avoidance of basic errors in all situations," and that Presidents should not get lost in detail and that a short agenda is a good presidential idea, and that we need a strong President (provided he's good) and that other Presidents have bent the law and that there is more to knowledge than facts, etc. Those and similar statements are commonsensical thoughts worth stating again, because people tend to forget them in the hurly-burly of the current daily revelations. Now that the Reagan tide has turned, it is your turn to lean against it, as I have been leaning from the start. But I don't think you will find in my blatherings statements which contradict any of that.

Other problems are fascinatingly empirical. I do look forward to what you will write about tax reform. To me, what was appropriate, given the result of tax cuts, was not tax reform but tax rise, for which tax reform turned out to be a convenient substitute. But if it is the case that Reagan was genuinely engaged in it, even if he did not, as you say, deal with the details, that is going to be a very interesting story, particularly if your facts show him directing the show in person.

In many other places, the question really is simply a matter of evidence. I think I have been through every significant Reagan biography and have tried to keep up with the journalism on him. But as you suggest, there are still lots of gaps in the whole Reagan story, particularly Iranscam. I will be very surprised, however, if your views on the following are ever confirmed by evidence:

•that "the invasion of Grenada, the



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bombing of Libya, and the Strategic Defense Initiative" are "things [that] turned out all right." The first two did not turn out all right for the dead and maimed and the third has put the arms race in space, despite the great majority of experts who do not ridicule it, but find it too dangerous for them to make money off of;

•similarly that "the military significance of the arms shipments was small" would not seem so to the Iraqis;

•that Reykjavik was no example of "chaos at the top," despite what George Shultz had to say about it at

Two hundred forty-one dead boys in Lebanon is quite an exception.

first, Don Regan after his spin succeeded, and even Henry Kissinger—but the question is what actually happened there, not some theoretical judgment;

•that "the history of the Reagan Administration thus far is one of extraordinary caution, the sole exceptions being Grenada . . . and Lebanon." Two hundred forty-one dead boys in Lebanon is quite an exception, but it seems to me that to characterize this Administration as otherwise one of "extraordinary caution" one would have to deal with quite a range of stories from Stockman on supply-side chaos, through the Falklands and Bitburg, and much else, not to mention the scores of directly and radically counterfactual statements Reagan has pronounced—with serious demeanor—on matters of high significance (and sensitivity).

When you say that "at the moment, the economy is doing fairly well . . ." I suppose you mean that we don't have a depression going yet, or some such, but is the economy doing well with those twin deficits?

To say that Iranscam is "a small temporary problem" seems to me already run over by the facts. (Trivial pursuit: the Hippocratic oath does not say do no harm.)

The point is that a number of your judgments on this business lean hard against the empirical observations of most others, before and after the revelations, and thus would depend on startling new discoveries—sure to make the front page of the *New York Times*—about the operations of Reagan's regime.

Then there are matters in which theoretical concerns are laced with the factual ones.

Is Reagan "easily led"? You make accurately the point that he has received lots of competing advice and thus "at a minimum, the President has to choose among advisers." Correct. But my theory is that the passive/positive is most likely to go along with those he is closest to—physically—day by day. As his wife and many others have said, he does not like conflict up close. Like Taft and Harding, he is more dependent than any other Presidents on his inner circle. Tentatively, I think the switch from the early flock of California richies who moved into the Watergate to shape him along, to the next bunch—the pragmatists—Baker, Meese, Darman, Deaver, who helped him con Congress through the tax cuts, and on to Regan's monopoly of communication—those shifts in close advisers help to explain shifts in presidential policy. In any case, the theory is not that he collapses before every Tom, Dick, and Harry who walks into the Oval Office, but that he is comparatively much more attuned than other Presidents to maintaining harmony with those he sees day by day, including the Mrs.

You're right that there is no one ideal staff system—I agree (and have so written). This is a mistake of the sociologically inclined political scientists who think they can organize character out of the presidency. Lots of luck. But for this President to turn over the office to Regan (in my vision of it) is dangerous, especially, interestingly, because Regan is in a different way as lacking in substantive conviction as Reagan is—a managerial analogue to the directable actor looking for a script. The few who slipped by Regan (e.g., Ollie North) seem (only that) to have had quite an impact on Reagan. I agree with Alex George that multiple advocacy is a good idea and with Janis that groupthink is a danger. But none of that is solvable by restructuring alone. It depends on a President who is curious and realistic, neither of which this one is.

You have interesting comments on why the teflon fell off at just this point. There are many examples of him speaking nonsense long before this, so I can't see the plausibility of the explanation that the people are noticing he is just starting that. Except this way: Presidents are given enormous benefits of the doubt. Nixon's offenses were brought out in the summer of 1972, to very little effect. Johnson's Tonkin fakery got exposed long before Congress turned against him. You are right that Reagan has been subject to criticism all along, his lies and fantasies repeatedly noted in the press and, indeed, in bound books of his misstatements. That point I think is symbolized best in "The Emperor's New Clothes," in which right up until the little guy blows the whistle, all the king's men pretend they can't see his nudeness through his imaginary robes. Then, in a paradigmatic shift of focus, suddenly everybody notices—and remembers that he was raw naked before, too.

As for the punishment angle, as to whether Reagan has been substantially punished ("suffered enough?"), that's a dimension I don't get into. Let St. Peter judge this "Man of God," as Larry Speakes calls him. I'm not into rating Presidents as humans but as Presidents. It is only in that sense that his personality is "fatally flawed," as you put it. I got that into print on his Inauguration Day in the *Washington Post* and in a long chapter in *PC III* in 1985 [*The Presidential Character*, 3rd edition, Prentice-Hall, 1985]. That Reagan is professionally responsible for the contra war, supporting the Chilean torturers, bucking up Botha, etc. is true. It is judgments about those responsibilities which lead to the conclusion that he should not have been President, not judgments about his personal morals. Unlike Stockman, I did not go to theology school, so I am humble when it comes to deciding how long U. S. Grant should spend in purgatory, etc.

I think you trivialize the Iran thing too much. The President came on loud and clear to the nation and, even more important, to the world: no deals with terrorists. He was urging the Europeans to unify around a strong policy, a hard change from what they had been doing, arguing that only if we all stick together in stonewalling ransom demands can we beat back the kidnappers. Stand firm, he said. Meanwhile, he was doing the opposite. It is that kind of lying, not the interesting deviations you describe from previous Presidents, that fundamentally undercut the trust on which effective political leadership depends. When a President vigorously advocates a thrust of policy opposite to what he is actually pursuing, he rips up trust. Cf. LBJ in 1964, RMN in 1968, etc. You're right that none of us can achieve "total harmony between words and deeds," but most of us blunder along with the words and deeds pointing in roughly the same direction. When a President makes war while pumping peace, describes his compassion while he supports butchers, trumpets a war on drugs as he cuts the budget for it, advocates a balanced budget as he knocks it farther off its balance than ever before—that kind of disharmony is what erodes trust domestically and worldwide.

It's hard for me to believe you think the President should not or need not have known about the diversion of funds to the contras. Maybe I've got your message wrong. Because it wasn't much money? Because competent people were taking care of it? Wasn't aid to the contras on your list of the major controversies between the President and Congress, and an issue the polls showed had the public against him? Carter did get too immersed in detail. But I cannot imagine any other President, except possibly Harding, who would not have wanted to know that new millions were being switched into that fight.

On Congress's role in recovery, I'm thinking more and more that we need to move toward closer White House-Congress cooperative policy-making, to get past the dangers of isolated Presidents going bananas. I'm not sure that's the way to go, and would welcome more thoughts of yours on it. As above, structure won't do the job.

What I learn again from all this is the profound necessity of choosing the right President in the first place. Running for President and being President are now separate ball games

I'm not into rating Presidents as humans but as Presidents.

in which the rules, the tests, the challenges are fundamentally different. Presidential candidates get better and better at playing to the press's professional obsession with novelty and immediacy. It's always what's next, not what is. Journalists claim not to want to be psychologists as they go about psychologizing every day. The problem is partly facts, but more using the sense they should get from observing the actualities of characters in the Presidency to assess characters who want to get in there.

At a bigger philosophical level, I think you and other political scientists should take a long and serious look at what you mean by "success" in politics. For most of Reagan's time, a good number of political scientists who found his policies substantively cruel and idiotic nevertheless lauded his success in getting them through. I don't buy that. Neither did Socrates.

Well, enough said. This critic of Reagan, who has been such through all those years when political science conferences one after another puffed him up, this one is not laughing. This one is not out with "I told you so." This one is seriously concerned that the government of the United States fails to work effectively for peace and justice and liberty out there in the real world. And that the quality of discourse has degenerated as far as it has. □

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Jonathan Cohen

CHERNOBYL ANNIVERSARY TIME

From the fallout you'd never know it wasn't a U.S. reactor that blew.

April marks the first anniversary of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl Unit 4 in Pripyat, USSR, which resulted in billions of dollars in industrial and agricultural damage, the evacuation of more than 100,000 people from their homes, the rendering of more than 100 square miles of the Ukraine useless and uninhabitable for years to come, general panic throughout Europe, the serious injury of more than 200 fire fighters and plant workers, and the death of thirty-one others. Some have also claimed that the Chernobyl disaster should have wide-ranging implications for the commercial nuclear power program in the United States. The most comprehensive version of the accident that we have—or are likely to have—is contained in a Soviet report issued at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna this past August. The report is surprisingly complete, even though it is sprinkled with references to "the senselessness and unacceptability of war under modern conditions," and "the problem of the spread of nuclear weapons." The political incongruities, however, are apparently meant to draw attention from the more serious news:

•Before the accident, more than half of the USSR's nuclear power was being produced by RBMK[1] graphite reactors of the kind that exploded at Chernobyl (fourteen larger plants and several smaller ones). The Soviets relied heavily on this seriously flawed design because it enabled them to use their civilian power plants for the dual purpose of making weapons plutonium. They did this while fully aware that the RBMK can lurch out of control under many kinds of mechanical failures and operator errors that pose no danger in U.S. nuclear plants.

•Seven new RBMKs are in construction and figure prominently in a massive Soviet commitment to nuclear power that will bring at least forty-four new nuclear plants on line before the end of the century. By contrast, the United States is planning no new nuclear capacity after 1990.

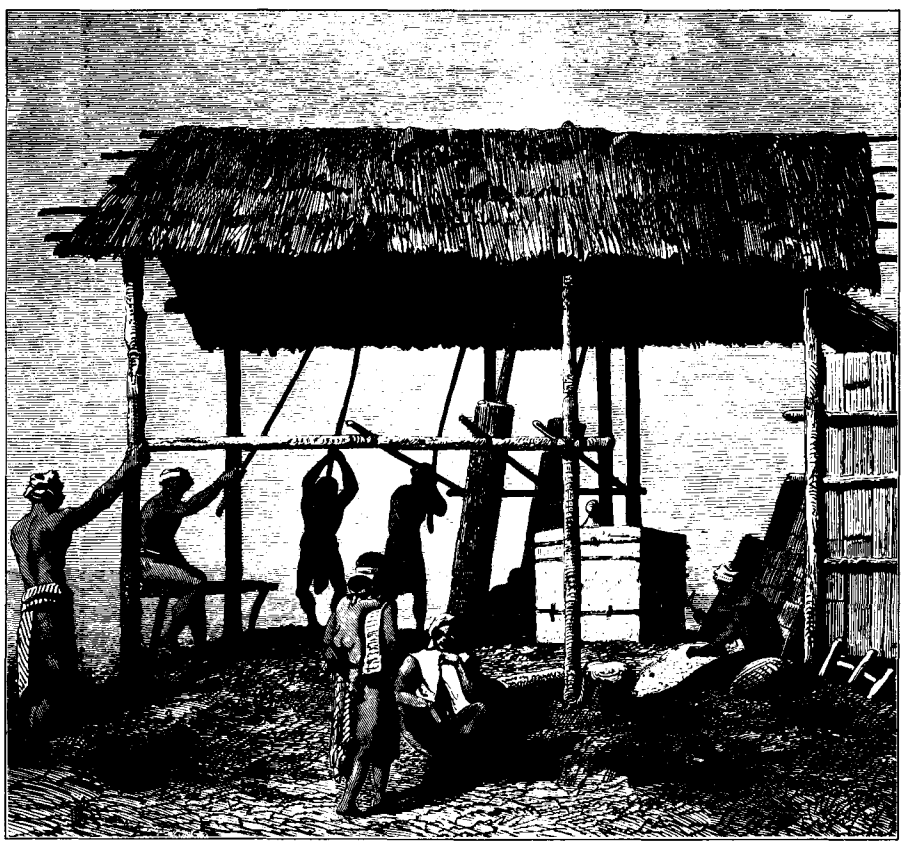
•By designing the Chernobyl Unit 4 reactor with a minimal regard for safety and by manning it with incompetent operators, the Soviets produced a new kind of catastrophe: the world's first nuclear power plant blow-out. Contrary to hasty reports in the U.S. media, Chernobyl did not suffer a "meltdown" of the kind that partially occurred at Three Mile Island. Instead, Chernobyl Unit 4 was blown to bits.

Though the degree of irresponsibility in the Soviet nuclear power program came as a surprise to many U.S. scientists, no expert, as far as can be determined, has doubted the basic Soviet account of the disaster.

"The events described in the Soviet report are at the same time too logical, too detailed, and too unusual to seem untrue," said Dr. L. M. Grossman of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley. "Perhaps there was some undue emphasis placed on blaming the plant operators, rather than the reactor design, but the accident scenario is convincing."

The Soviet report squarely blames a team of three test operators who pushed buttons in the right sequence to blow the roof off the power plant, citing their "deliberate and willful" violations of operating rules and procedures, their poorly prepared and unapproved test plan, and the safety measures that had been drafted for a special test and then "ignored as a mere formality."

As with other famous Soviet boo-



boos, the real villains are bureaucratic, and the report leaves them shrouded in the mists of unofficial history. Who left the poorly trained test operators at the controls of the reactor? Who planned the ill-advised turbine test that precipitated the accident? Who made the original decision to dot the Soviet landscape with the dangerous RBMKs? (Interestingly, the fate of the three operators, who were employed by the Soviet electrical firm Dom Tech Energo, is also uncertain. Last August, Professor Aram Abagayan of the new Soviet Ministry for Atomic Energy told *Nucleonics Week* that the operators are "quite well and alive," but he was contradicted in statements made the same week in Vienna by Academician Valery Legasov, who referred to the operators "while they were still alive." In other words, they may have been shot or were among those thirty or so plant workers who perished—"with 80 to 90 percent loss of skin," as the Soviets put it—in the shower of radiation and white-hot debris that followed the big blow-out.)

The Chernobyl blow-out was started during a seemingly mundane experiment to see how some new electrical equipment would work in the event of a station blackout, or—as engineers call it—a loss of both on-site and off-site power. In order to keep itself going, an RBMK diverts some of the electricity it produces. In a nuclear plant this is an important safety concern because coolant pumps must be kept working—even after the reactor is shut down—to supply coolant water to the hot reactor core. If the RBMK is shut down on short notice (or "scrammed" as our engineers say), electricity must be delivered to coolant pumps from an off-site source. Without off-site power and without a steady supply of coolant, the core of the shutdown reactor will become dangerously hot.

A reactor shutdown combined with

[1]RBMK is a Cyrillic acronym for "Heterogenous water-graphite channel-type reactor."

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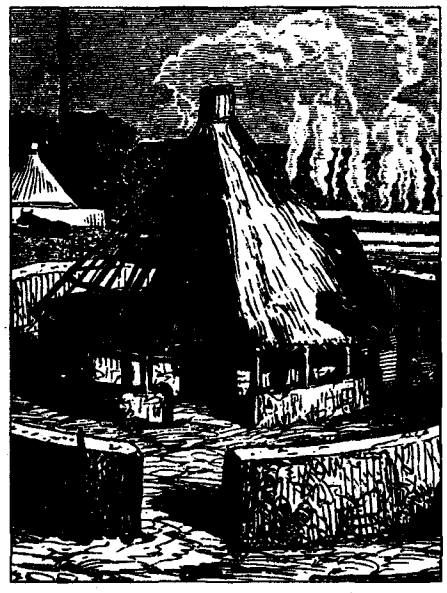
a loss of coolant and a loss of off-site power could conceivably result from a major earthquake, a military or terrorist attack, or any number of even less likely events. The Chernobyl test operators meant to simulate this sort of emergency. In the United States such an occurrence is prepared for with great seriousness, and at great expense. Tens of millions of dollars are spent at every U.S. nuclear plant to purchase, maintain, and constantly test emergency diesel generators that are designed to deliver electricity to plant systems in ten seconds or less, which ensures the renewed operation of pumps and other plant systems in time to prevent the overheating of nuclear fuel.

In the Soviet Union, however, fast-starting diesels (like a dozen other safety features required on all U.S. plants) are judged an extravagance. The diesels at Soviet nuclear plants are designed to get going in about a minute's time—much too long to leave their volatile reactors without adequate cooling water. The Soviets thus rely on a kind of Rube Goldberg strategy to keep cooling water flowing to the reactor in a blackout. They link the turbine generator to the main coolant pumps with a voltage regulator, on the theory that momentum will keep the turbine spinning for at least a minute after the reactor is shut down. As the turbine slows, it is supposed to supply enough electricity to keep the pumps in operation until the slow-starting diesels kick in.

To test this system, the reactor busters from Dom Tech Energo were ordered first to adjust the nuclear chain reaction to a specified moderate level of power at which they could safely re-create emergency conditions. Unfortunately, the RBMK is a finicky mechanism: its graphite core is channelled with more than 1,600 pressurized tubes of nuclear fuel, each of which can be independently controlled. The power level prescribed by the test plan proved to be an elusive target for the operators. They struggled through the early morning hours on April 25 and into the afternoon on April 26 to produce the right conditions. Just when they were approaching the right level of power, however, an order arrived that more electricity was needed from the plant. Power had to be stabilized at 50 percent, well above the 22 to 30 percent required by the test.



The operators, in other words, were left in the cheerful state of mind that comes from working all night for no reason. And to make things worse, after the interruption the reactor again proved difficult to control. By 11:10 p.m.—in spite of efforts to split more atoms—power had fallen to one percent. It was probably clear to the operators at this point that the test—if carried out according to specifications—might take several days longer than planned. Some scientists have speculated that the operators were hurrying in order to assure their time off for the upcoming May Day holiday.

The Soviets rely on a kind of Rube Goldberg strategy to keep cooling water flowing to the reactor in a blackout.

Apparently, the operators decided at this point to break with their orders. It is also possible that they received orders from a higher-up to damn the torpedoes and get the test over with. Whatever the motivation, the operators made the ghastly decision to conduct the test while the reactor was operating at low power. If they (or their superiors?) had possessed a more sophisticated understanding of the reactor, they would have realized that this was suicidally dangerous. Soviet technical literature is full of warnings about the predisposition of the RBMK to zoom out of control at low power if any disturbance should occur in the coolant supply.

The test was started at 1:23 a.m. on April 26—less than a minute before the fireworks. To get the test started, the operators first had to disconnect the turbine from the steam being generated in the core. But this would bring an emergency coolant system into play and spoil the test conditions. Accordingly, the operators switched off the emergency coolant system—the last line of their safety defense.

The stage was thus set for the world's first nuclear blow-out. The turbine, gradually slowing to a halt, kept the main coolant pumps working for about 40 seconds. Then, however, the turbine slowed still further, which reduced the voltage reaching the pumps. This, in turn, reduced the reactor's supply of coolant. The reactor responded by zooming from 7 to 50 percent power in just a few seconds. With the nuclear chain reaction accelerating out of control, a blast of heat was released from the uranium fuel that disintegrated much of the reactor core in an eruption of poisonous steam. The blast instantly destroyed the hall built on top of the reactor (where a handful of victims were at work), and it easily lifted away the flimsy roof. The Chernobyl 4 reactor, as the world would soon learn, was housed in a multi-story garage.

As was frequently mentioned in the U.S. media following the accident, Chernobyl Unit 4 was without the thick steel and concrete containment shell that must surround all commercial nuclear power reactors in the United States. It was this protective shell, as was only sometimes mentioned, that kept the accident at Three Mile Island (which involved some melting of nuclear fuel due to a temporary loss of coolant) from posing any danger to the public. Though a U.S.-type containment would have certainly restricted the spread of radioactive poison following the blow-out, it should be emphasized that the design of the RBMK reactor was the fundamental cause of both the explosion and its consequences.

Most significantly, the RBMK is different from all commercial nuclear plants in the United States by virtue of its *positive void coefficient of reactivity.*[2] This means that the nuclear chain reaction in the RBMK is accelerated when its tubes of uranium fuel are deprived (or "voided") of coolant. If coolant is taken away—as happened at Chernobyl—an RBMK operating at low power can rapidly surge in power. This boils away more coolant, causing a further increase in power and still more boiling. If things aren't quickly brought under control with a fresh supply of coolant, a disastrous release of heat can result.

This contrasts radically with the predominant U.S. reactor type, the light water reactor (LWR), which for fundamental purposes of safety is designed to cease operation when coolant is taken away. In all but one U.S. commercial reactor,[3] water serves as both the coolant and the "moderator" that "transfers" neutrons between rods of uranium fuel. Take away coolant from a U.S. reactor, as happened at Three Mile Island, and the chain reaction will come to a halt. U.S. operators facing a loss-of-coolant-accident (LOCA) must contend only with the decay heat produced by the residue of the halted fission process. For this and many other reasons, a LOCA causing danger to the American public is about as likely as a Boeing 747 crashing into Yankee Stadium during a Sunday doubleheader while Don Mattingly is at bat.

The RBMK, on the other hand, uses water for a coolant and a block of flammable graphite as a moderator. The graphite creates an added danger—also made real at Chernobyl—of a fire burning and then smoldering in the core for days after the accident. It was this graphite fire at Chernobyl, and not the blow-out itself, that caused most of the dispersal of radioactive materials over the Ukraine and points west. The combination of graphite, the unstable core, and the lack of containment adds up to a reactor that could not be licensed in any country outside the Soviet bloc.

But why did the Soviets make these dangerous choices in nuclear technology? First, the Soviets have only recently mastered the metallurgical skills necessary to forge the steel pressure vessels used to contain the nuclear fuel in U.S. LWRs. Through the 1950s and 1960s, this lack of know-how left them stuck with pressure tubes in graphite. Second, containment buildings cost too much money. And finally—and perhaps most importantly—the RBMK is designed to double as both a power plant and a production facility for weapons plutonium. The elaborate system of pressure tubes allows the Soviets to dedicate individual fuel channels to specially prepared uranium that can be transmuted during the normal operation of the reactor into the stuff of nuclear warheads. And by forgoing containment buildings, the Soviets can slide bundles of fuel in and out of the reactor without first shutting it down. This allows them not only to harvest plutonium for use in their warheads, but to do so without interrupting the flow of electricity. Soviet energy officials have several times denied to Western experts that Cher-

[2]Some U.S. commercial reactors can briefly show a positive void coefficient of reactivity when operated at low power. This condition, however, would quickly correct itself if too much coolant were boiled away.

[3]The only commercial reactor in the United States that is not a LWR is the graphite-moderated Fort St. Vrain Station operated by Public Service Company of Colorado in Platteville, Colorado. This reactor is cooled with gas, fully contained, and free of the dangerous reactivity characteristics of the RBMK. The safety of the two graphite reactors operated by the federal government for nuclear weapons production is beyond the purview of this article.

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nobyl Unit 4 was used for weapons production. These protests, however, steer clear of the fact that the doomed power plant—and many more still operating in the Soviet Union—are *designed* to double as bomb factories. And along with this capability come the design flaws that make the RBMKs so dangerous.

Incidentally, the Soviets have since announced a piecemeal plan to adjust their RBMKs to eliminate the possibility of an identical accident occurring in the future. To date, there is no evidence that they have done so. In fact, Energy Secretary John Herrington told a Senate subcommittee last November that two of the other RBMKs at the Chernobyl site had most probably been restarted without the completion of the promised upgrades. In any case, the proposed corrections are mere band-aids that provide neither adequate containment, an adequate system for quickly shutting down the reactor, nor a complete solution to the RBMKs predisposition to getting out of control. Western experts have offered technical help through the IAEA, but they and their international organization are being kept informed only to the extent that they can serve Soviet purposes. Because the Soviets won't abide snooping on their weapons production system, they have steadfastly refused Western experts more than superficial tours of their nuclear plants.

Unfortunately, the technical and philosophical differences between the U.S. and Soviet nuclear power programs—including the fact that weapons and power production are kept separate in the United States—have not piqued the interest of the American press, which has thus missed the chief lesson of the disaster: our nuclear plants are safer by several orders of magnitude than Chernobyl Unit 4.

The unwillingness of the media to discuss positive void coefficients of reactivity, for example, is representative of the new status of nuclear power as a political issue. For liberals—especially those opposed to all things nuclear and friendly toward the Soviets—Chernobyl created cognitive dissonance and was quickly forgotten.

And some politicians, like New York's Governor Cuomo and Representative Ed Markey of Massachusetts, rediscovered nuclear power as an issue for alarming that growing part of the electorate that is not so much skeptical about energy sources as merely without a clue. Because of the mysterious similarities discovered by the likes of Cuomo and Markey between Chernobyl and the U.S. nuclear power program, further delays were engineered in the opening of new nuclear plants at Shoreham, Long Island; Seabrook, New Hampshire; and North Perry, Ohio. While these plants sit idle at the expense of both utility shareholders and ratepayers, existing nuclear plants are cleanly and safely powering the same regions where the new nukes have been declared taboo. Savvy politicians can thus take advantage of a temporary surplus in electric capacity, mortgage the future of regional economies, and fully exploit the fact that a large part of the public doesn't know where their electricity comes from in the first place.

Setbacks for a few U.S. plants, however, may not be as significant as the anti-nuclear groundswell that has followed the disaster in Europe. Plans to add more nuclear capacity have been stopped in the Netherlands and Finland; Sweden has voted for a rapid phase-out, and the West German program is suddenly under attack.

For now, nuclear power in the United States remains in deep trouble because of problems in the licensing system, and in the public's misperception of the dangers. We would face a disaster very different from the one at Chernobyl if these obstacles should impede our ability toward the end of the century to further develop what can be our safest, cleanest, and cheapest source of energy. Chernobyl should remind us that we have invested billions of dollars and some of the country's most conscientious technical talent for the enviable option of safe nuclear power. And it should remind us that the Soviets are recklessly lurching toward self-sufficiency in energy—with us or without us. □

Lewis E. Lehrman

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

One leads unmistakably from the other.

If it might be said that Abraham Lincoln, the circuit court litigator, was the framer of the post–Civil War Constitution, then it may also be said that President Lincoln was his own John Marshall. For in any exegesis of Lincoln's rhetoric one discovers not the temperament of a lawyer but the jurisprudence of a lawgiver. Nor need one accept all of Lincoln, the apologist and evangelist of the Declaration of Independence, to declare certain truths indispensable to the triumph of the idea of the American Republic. Indeed, if the Lincoln of the great debates and the Gettysburg Address did not exist, I would want to invent him, if only to reappropriate for modern conservatives, once and for all, the first principles of the American Founding—the Declaration of Independence. For it is no exaggeration to say that the future of the world now depends upon the future of American conservatism—and, therefore, upon the true principles of the American Republic we would conserve. And these we can know only from a right reading of the American Constitution.

Today, in the great debate over the authentic Constitution, inaugurated by Attorney General Ed Meese, conservatives are faced with several unresolved but fundamental issues: Are the legal positivists and legal realists, heirs of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Justice Charles Evans Hughes, right when they declare the American Constitution to be essentially what Supreme Court Justices or elected legislators say it to be—their rulings and statutes thus unappealable—even if such "law" plainly violates not only the organic law of the nation but also the law written in our hearts? Moreover, is it true, as historicists, relativists, and nihilists argue, that original intent—the actual meaning of the framers—is undiscoverable in the history of the Constitution, or even by a deep reading of the document itself? And, further, are strict text-based considerations now irrelevant, as "non-interpretivists" imply, when finding and applying the fundamental law of the land?

Or, on the other hand, are Jefferson, Madison, Washington, Adams, and Lincoln right when, affirming the Declaration and "the laws of nature and of nature's God," they "hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"; and further that all men "are endowed by their Creator" with the inalienable right to life, and to liberty? And did the founders imply correctly that any law or judicial ruling which violates *these inalienable human rights* is, by its nature, unenforceable, indeed unconstitutional since, according to the Declaration of Independence—the congressional act which united the Colonies and legitimated independence—it is primarily "to secure these [inalienable human] rights" that "governments are instituted among men"; further, that governments hold only "just powers derived from the consent of the governed"; and finally, "that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends [namely, the inalienable right to life and to liberty] it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government . . ."? Indeed, even *the people* are here constrained in the Declaration of 1776 to consent only to a government of *just* powers and laws. In their absence, the

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people—dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights—should institute new government.

These are the first principles of the American regime laid down by the founders at the birth of the republic on July 4, 1776; for not only Thomas Jefferson, but also James Madison, the father of the Constitution, held the Declaration to be, in their words, "the fundamental act of union." That is to say, the Declaration is part of the organic law by which to interpret American constitutional principles and to discover the original intent of the framers. The implications of this fact are too often ignored by constitutional scholars who focus narrowly on the positive law of the great charter of 1787 and its subsequent amendments. Nevertheless, no one can deny that the Declaration was, and is, placed first in the *United States Code of Laws* (1940)—even ahead of the Constitution—and described therein as "organic law." (See the position of the Declaration in *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America* 1-3, 1854; the *Federal and State Constitutions . . . and Other Organic Laws of the United States*, 1877; the *Revised Statutes of the United States* 3-6, 1878; the *United States Code* XIX-XXII, 1940.)

Thus Lincoln was clear and correct when, in 1863, he said "four score and seven years ago"—that is, on July 4, 1776—"our Fathers brought forth a new nation. . . ." (He did not say three score and 14 years ago—or 1789.) When Lincoln emphatically called himself a conservative, it was the first principles of the Declaration, our "ancient faith," which he sought to conserve, or rather restore in the Constitution of the United States. Accordingly, if it may now be said that the Fourteenth Amendment indirectly incorporated certain of the Bill of Rights, so too must it be affirmed that the first American Congresses, the original intent of the founders, and, moreover, the U.S. Code of Laws certainly incorporated the Declaration of Independence into the Constitution of the United States. Only, therefore, in light of the organic link between these two documents might American conservatives fully illuminate the great constitutional and moral debates of the present moment.

When Lincoln emphatically called himself a conservative, it was the first principles of the Declaration, our "ancient faith," which he sought to conserve.

Adapting Lincoln's words from his patient struggle for the inalienable right to liberty in the 1850s, we may now say that the "durable" moral issue of *our* age is the struggle for the inalienable right to life of the child-in-the-womb—and thus the right to life of all future generations. These are the penultimate stakes in the current controversy over how, once again, to interpret the inalienable human rights of the American founding. For the stakes could never be otherwise under a government characterized by "just powers." Whether we resolve it immediately or not, the issue of abortion is now joined. And, like the unresolved issue six score years ago—i.e., of the positive right of property of the white man in a black slave, or, on the contrary, the inalienable right to liberty of the black man—this current issue, too, shall be resolved, either for the positive right to abortion of the "foetus" (a chattel); or, on the contrary, for the inalienable right to life of the child-about-to-be-born (a person). Only prudential and practical wisdom, combined with compelling circumstance and necessity, could have delayed the resolution of both historic issues in the true American Republic.

The enduring question is: Shall the actual meaning of the Constitution—the original intent of the founders, as revealed in the document itself and illuminated by its history—prevail in all applications by the Supreme Court? Is this intent, the true meaning of the framers, too imprecise—thus unknowable—justifying the now trendy conclusion that the law can only be what Supreme Court Justices and legislators say it is? Surely it is correctly supposed under the American Constitution that all persons cannot be endowed both with the liberty to hold slaves and with the inalienable right to liberty; indeed, all persons cannot be endowed both with the liberty to take innocent life by abortion and with the inalienable right to life. Or is it now to be suggested that the law is only what the "sovereign" people vote it to be—no matter if judges, legislators, and the people decide and vote, say, for the permanent chattel right to dispose of property in the black man ("popular sovereignty"); or for the chattel right to dispose of property in the child-about-to-be-born (popular "pro-choice").

But if judicial supremacy, or majority rule, or "popular sovereignty" leads to an extra-constitutional decision, an unnatural outcome, can there be no further appeal under the last best hope—the authentic Constitution of the United States? This question shall not finally be answered in the law schools, for in the struggle between the moral and natural law (the Declaration of Independence) and legal positivism (adventitious, judge-made law), Americans will soon have to choose in coming presidential and congressional elections. And there is no more important choice before us as a people. For, as a nation founded under God, ours is a house which, divided against itself, cannot stand. So, it should come as no surprise that we the people shall again have to answer the question put so poignantly by Abraham Lincoln to his fellow Americans and to Senator Stephen Douglas in the great debates of 1858 and later in 1860 at Cooper Union: When the issues of life and liberty are at stake, can it ever be right to do wrong?

In deciding what is to be done to resolve the issue of abortion, conservatives must never forget the compelling case for Lincoln's conservatism, grounded as it was in the Declaration of Independence, the organic law of the American founding. Lincoln was, in fact, one of the most persuasive advocates of what the great legal historian, Edward S. Corwin, called the "higher law" principles of the American Constitution. This ancient doctrine suggested that the founding principles of the American regime, according to which the positive law of the Constitution ought to be interpreted, were first and best codified in the natural right doctrine of the Declaration of Independence. In this sense Lincoln was neither a radical nor a conservative. Instead he argued for *restoration* of the original principle of the American Republic—equality of all persons before the law—a principle to be carried out gradually and prudentially in due deference to countervailing circumstance and necessity. Such was Lincoln's principled and prudential policy toward slavery. But today it must be said that Lincoln's view of the self-evident truths of the Declaration is a minority position—among liberals *and* conservatives—confronting as it does a prevailing consensus of relativism in the courts, the legislature, and the law schools. The elite consensus may best be summed up in the words of my friend, Benno Schmidt, former dean of Columbia Law School and now president of Yale, who in discussing this issue with me said, "American constitutional law is positive law, and the Declaration of Independence should have no standing in constitutional interpretation whatsoever."

Ironically, contemporary legal theory, both conservative and liberal, tends to decide constitutional intent by reference to authorities substantially *outside* the four corners of the full text of the Constitution itself. In the one case, as with Attorney General Ed Meese (see his Dickinson College speech of 1985), one is carefully directed to find in the Declaration of Independence an *extrinsic* authority by which to determine the original intent of the framers of the Constitution; in the other case, as with Justice Harry Blackmun (see his opinion in *Roe* v. *Wade*), one is circuitously directed to discover an extrinsic authority for con-

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stitutional interpretation in the supervening extra-textual opinion of Supreme Court Justices themselves.

But while the Supreme Court majority today has all but ignored it, there is another authoritative way to discover original intent, as Christopher Wolfe reminds us in his important book, *The Rise of Modern Judicial Review* (Basic Books, 1985). That way we can find in the work of Chief Justice John Marshall, whose preeminent authority has been claimed not only by traditionalists who hold that the Supreme Court Justice must always find the actual meaning of the law in the original intent of the framers, but also by judicial supremacists who hold that the judge must and should legislate himself. But let us read, in *Osborne* v. *Bank of United States*, the words of Chief Justice Marshall himself: "Judicial power is never exercised for the purpose of giving effect . . . to the will of the judge; always for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the law"—law made by the legislator who draws his authority directly from the people. And further, he declares, "we [judges] must never forget that it is a Constitution we are expounding," not the legislative opinions of judges. But in *Marbury* v. *Madison*, Marshall states: "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is."

Yet in *McCullough* v. *Maryland* he emphasizes that "where the law is not prohibitive" [i.e., where the law does not clearly prohibit a legislative action], for judges "to undertake . . . to inquire into the degree of [the law's] necessity would be to pass the line which circumscribes the judicial department and to tread on legislative ground." The Chief Justice clearly held that the judicial department *is* circumscribed; and it *is* limited by legislative (or constitutional) intent. Moreover, Marshall's legal reasoning and opinions show how and why, according to commonly accepted rules of judicial interpretation, the original intent of the framers of the Constitution can best be discovered "intrinsically." That is to say, Justice Marshall used a substantially internal analysis of the actual document itself to find in its text the framers' intent—carefully applying rational rules of legal construction which depend primarily upon the plain meaning of the words, the full context of the words, the relations of the words in the different parts of the Constitution, the subject matter with which the words of the law deal, and the obvious spirit or cause which gave rise to the law itself.

That the law, above all, is intended to do justice, whatever the rules of construction, is a first principle of Marshall's jurisprudence which he makes clear in *Marbury* v. *Madison* by asking the fundamental question: "Can it be imagined that the law furnishes to the injured person no remedy?"—no matter how small, helpless, defenseless, or obscure the person. To this question Marshall rejoined: "It is not believed that any person whatever would attempt to maintain such a proposition." Moreover, the fundamental principles of natural justice, suggested Marshall in *Ogden* v. *Saunders*, stemmed from the very principles of "the framers of our constitution" who "were intimately acquainted with . . . the law of nature"

When the issues of life and liberty are at stake, can it ever be right to do wrong?

because "the language they have used" in their writings and documents, such as the Declaration and the Constitution, "confirms this opinion."

Thus, Marshall found it straightforward if sometimes painstaking to decide faithfully whether a law or act or judicial decision was unconstitutional. He enshrined his reasoning in the *Marbury* decision. Often cited by both judicial supremacists and legal positivists who reject natural law, Marshall in *Marbury* considers "the question, whether an act, repugnant to the Constitution, can become the law of the land. It seems only necessary to recognize certain principles, supposed to have been long and well established, to decide it." And by what *principles* shall it be decided? To this question Marshall had an unequivocal answer. "That the people have an original right to establish for their future government such principles as, in their opinion, shall most conduce to their own happiness, is *the basis* [my emphasis] on which the whole American fabric is erected." And, moreover, "the principles, therefore, so established are deemed fundamental."

But why is Marshall so absolutely sure of "the basis" and "the principles" deemed fundamental to the Constitution—that is, to the "whole American fabric"? Because, in fact, Marshall draws the very words of this part of his opinion almost exactly from the Declaration of Independence itself—from its second paragraph, which reads, "It is the right of the people . . . to institute a new government laying its foundation on such principles . . . as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . ." But the phrase *such principles* must also refer to its antecedents, specified in the preceding paragraph of the Declaration, namely, those self-evident truths which hold that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with the inalienable right to life and to liberty.

The lawful basis of the American Republic is thus, in fact, found by Chief Justice Marshall in the very same organic law upheld by Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence. But, echoing Marshall, one must now ask: can it be supposed that the Declaration, the fundamental act of union, which provides the basis for the American people to establish constitutional government—can it truly be supposed that this explicit charter of the inalienable right to life is to be ignored by Supreme Court Justices, legislators, Presidents, and law school professors? May it be reasonably supposed that an expressly stipulated right to life, as set forth in the Declaration and the Constitution, is to be set aside in favor of the conjured right to abortion in *Roe* v. *Wade*, a spurious right born exclusively of judicial supremacy with not a single trace of lawful authority, implicit or explicit, in the actual text or history of the Constitution itself?

Are we finally to suppose that the right to life of the child-about-to-be-born—an inalienable right, the *first* in the sequence of God-given rights warranted in the Declaration of Independence and also enumerated *first* among the basic positive rights to life, liberty, and property stipulated in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution—are we, against all reason and American history, to suppose that the right to life as set forth in the American Constitution may be lawfully eviscerated and amended by the Supreme Court of the United States with neither warrant nor amendment directly or indirectly from the American people whatsoever? Is it not a biological necessity, if it were not manifestly plain from the sequence of the actual words in the Declaration *and* in the constitutional amendments themselves, that liberty is made for life, not life for liberty? Is it to be reasonably supposed that the right to liberty is safe if the right to life is not first secured; and, further, is it to be maintained that human life "endowed by the Creator" commences in the second or third trimester and not at the very beginning of the child-in-the-womb?

Given the consequences of *Roe* v. *Wade*, can it thus be concluded that a well-intentioned but overreaching Supreme Court decision brought about a "coup" against the Constitution and the amendment-making authority of the American people? In the full light of the resulting holocaust, are we at last to suppose that legal positivists and judicial supremacists, even some conservative advocates of original intent and strict construction, all of whom cite Marshall, may properly abandon the Declaration of Independence, the lawful source of those inalienable human rights which are now, in the case of *Roe* v. *Wade*, issues of life and death—when not only the Founding Fathers but Chief Justice Marshall and President Lincoln find that certain American "principles . . . are deemed fundamental," because they stem from the Declaration? Surely "it is not believed any person whatever would attempt to maintain such a proposition. . . ." Surely not Mr. Washington, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Lincoln—all of whom maintained for the Declaration. □

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LATVIA'S CHAUTAUQUA CIRCUIT

by Ojars Kalnins

The moment the Baltic States were swallowed up by the Soviets in 1940, an Iron Curtain of silence descended between occupied Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and the West. Free Baltic organizations have been fighting to get news out—and in—ever since. Although it hasn't been easy, reports from tourists, letters, and the occasional defector, when combined with official Soviet reports, do allow us to assemble a good picture of what is happening under the Soviet occupation.

Getting news *in* is another matter, and in one sense it's even more important. In the last four decades, several new generations of Balts have come of age under the strict censorship of Soviet rule, knowing little if anything about their national histories or the ongoing campaign for Baltic freedom taking place in the West. Of history they only know what their parents or grandparents tell them. News from the West comes from tourists, or what they can occasionally cull from heavily jammed Voice of America and Radio Free Europe broadcasts.

Understandably, the people of the occupied Baltic states are desperate for information from the West, especially regarding activities undertaken on their behalf by free Baltic organizations and Western governments. Since World War II the Soviets have taken great pains to convince the people of occupied Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia that the "free Baltic movement" is dead. According to Soviet propagandists, Baltic émigré organizations are both ineffective and insignificant, and support for the "liberation" of the Baltic States is virtually nonexistent.

Until now. For some unfathomable reason, during the past several months the Soviet press in Latvia has decided to let the cat out of the bag. Rather than ignore the increasingly active free Baltic groups in the West, they have begun openly to attack them. In the process they are providing the information-starved Latvians in occupied Latvia with surprisingly detailed reports about the activities and influence of these groups. For those who know how to read between the lines—which includes just about everyone behind the Iron Curtain—it's been an information bonanza.

Much of it seems to be a direct result of the September 1986 Chautauqua Conference in Latvia, when over 270 American citizens joined a handful of present and former U.S. government officials in an "exercise in open diplomacy," i.e., an unprecedented series of uncensored debates with Soviet spokesmen on U.S.-Soviet relations. The Soviet insistence that the conference take place in Latvia appeared to be a calculated attempt to undermine the longstanding U.S. policy which refuses to recognize the legality of the Soviet annexation of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. The presence of high-ranking U.S. officials on Latvian soil, the Soviets figured, would put the "Baltic question" to rest once and for all. The State Department saw it differently. Working closely with Latvian-American leaders, it decided to use the conference to give new life to the non-recognition policy by openly challenging Soviet rule at the scene of the crime, namely on the soil of occupied Latvia.

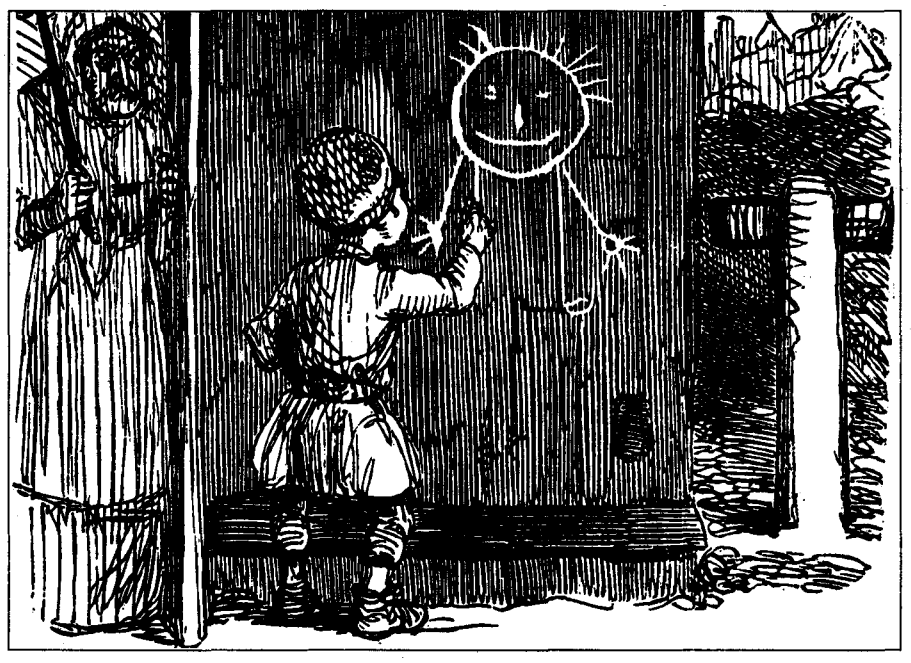
In anticipation that the debates (which the Soviets agreed to televise in Latvia) would raise sensitive nationalist issues, the Soviets felt compelled to "explain them away" to the Latvian people beforehand. A lengthy, highly polemical article in the August 1986 Latvian-language *Soviet Latvian Communist* launched a broad attack on U.S. policy toward the Baltic States and the efforts of the Baltic-American community to keep that policy alive. While the purpose of the article was to ridicule both, it provided Latvian readers with an amazing wealth of detail about the Baltic-American community's success in winning White House, State Department, and congressional support.

Intentionally or not, the article put to rest any previous Soviet claims that the "Baltic issue" is dead in the West. It complained of "the large number of documents touching on the Baltic Republics" issuing from the White House and federal agencies in recent years, singling out President Reagan's 1986 Baltic Freedom Day Proclamation as the worst of the lot, since it accuses the Soviet Union of human rights violations, genocide, and other abuses against the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian people. The authors attribute this to an "unrealistic" U.S. foreign policy which seeks to aggravate relations with the Soviet Union.

In defense of this charge the article lays out the Soviet version of Latvia's "voluntary" incorporation into the Soviet Union on July 21, 1940 and then indignantly states, "Within two days the U.S. State Department announced that it does not recognize Latvia's incorporation into the Soviet Union. . . . Although over 40 years have passed, the imperialists still ignore reality and refuse to recognize the status of the Baltic States." This in itself is quite an admission by the Soviet-controlled Latvian press, since it provides the younger generation of Soviet-educated Latvians with confirmation of a U.S. policy which may have been largely unknown to them. But the article doesn't stop there. It proceeds to inform its readers, in detail, of all the charges the U.S. has made against the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, citing examples such as "forced occupation," "oppression of the Baltic people," and violations of human rights and the right to self-determination. It even reveals that the U.S. bases its charges on the principles stated in the U.N. Charter. The fact that the U.S. government still accredits the diplomatic legations of independent Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia is also scathingly attacked. "Understandably, Washington would like to promote the Baltic States as part of their sphere of influence in hopes of 'liberating' the Baltic people." Of course, the authors assert, the "Soviet" Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian people want none of this.

The article returns repeatedly to President Reagan's stubborn refusal to recognize the "legality" of Soviet rule over Latvia and then drops a bombshell: "As the ringleaders of the U.S. anti-Soviet Baltic émigré groups have boasted, it is indeed true that they have never had greater support or better relations with the White House than at the present." To back this claim, it describes how Reagan personally meets each June with Baltic-American leaders in the White House to commemorate Baltic Freedom Day. It is not difficult to imagine the comfort such news must provide to nationalists in Latvia who have worried about waning interest in their cause in the West.

At the same time this article appeared, Latvian television broadcast film clips of the 1985 Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise, anti-Soviet demonstrations in Helsinki, and other recent actions organized by free Baltic groups in the West, all dutifully accompanied by appropriate critical commentary. Thanks to this unprecedented pre-Chautauqua media blitz, many Latvians learned of these events for the first time.



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On September 15 the Chautauqua delegation arrived in Riga, Latvia, and the Soviets' worst fears were realized. In his opening address to the conference, the Special Adviser to the President on Soviet Affairs, Jack Matlock, announced, "The use of force and absence of freely given consent are the reasons the United States has never recognized and will never recognize the legality of the forcible incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia into the Soviet Union." Remarkably, this statement, and the indignant Soviet response, was broadcast on Latvian television that same night, ensuring that over a million Latvians in the country knew what was taking place at the conference. Throughout the week of debates, the "Baltic question" kept popping up, prompting one Soviet spokesman to remark in exasperation, "It turns out we are discovering a regional conflict right here."

Even more annoying to the Soviets was the presence of seven young Latvian-American activists in the Chautauqua delegation, who challenged Soviet rule in Latvia during the debates, mingled with local Latvians in the streets, and passed out pins depicting the U.S. flag crossed with the banned maroon and white flag of independent Latvia. Their open espousal of Latvian nationalism was met with delight by the locals, who dubbed them "the seven little drummers" in honor of a traditional Latvian folk song of the same name.

The Chautauqua Conference has subsequently become the hottest news story in Soviet-ruled Latvia. While the Americans were present, news coverage was extensive but relatively mild in tone, chiding those American speakers who "spouted anti-Soviet propaganda," praising those who shared the Soviet dream of world peace, and generally endorsing the concept of the conference as a first step in improving U.S.-Soviet relations. In the last few months, however, Soviet Latvian television, radio, and newspapers have been flooded with interviews, commentaries, and analyses, attempting to cool down some of the more nationalistic emotions stirred up by the conference.

In the November 1986 issue of the *Soviet Latvian Communist*, a six-page overview of the conference devotes almost an entire page to the "Baltic question." The presence of the seven Latvian-Americans is described as a last ditch attempt by "reactionary émigrés" to salvage a hopeless cause. Matlock's statement is written off as a perfunctory gesture by a bureaucrat on behalf of an "aging dogma." Another article in the same issue, entitled "Flunkies," takes a more ominous tone, warning its Soviet Latvian readers against the growing threat posed by increasingly sophisticated "reactionary Latvian émigré" groups. These groups, it explains, have become polished lobbyists and are "infiltrating major American organizations, trade unions and political parties." The article seems especially concerned about third generation Latvian-Americans who have "successfully integrated themselves into the American economic, social and political system, mastered the dynamics of this system and learned how to exploit it to serve their purposes."[1] As an example of this the article describes how Latvian-Americans infiltrated the Chautauqua delegation and that "beginning in Washington, D.C., and continuing on the plane, passed out provocative literature and pins featuring crossed American and bourgeois Latvian flags." The author also quotes a *Washington Times* headline ("Latvians hail U.S. as nation's only hope") and a *Wall Street Journal* article describing Latvians as "hostages of the Soviet system" as examples of how the émigrés have succeeded in influencing the American press.

The reference to Latvians as Soviet "hostages" also appears in the November 12, 1986 Moscow-based *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. In an attack on Voice of America, a Lithuanian writer (writing, ironically, in Russian) quotes this description from VOA coverage of the Chautauqua Conference and then criticizes the 1986 Baltic Freedom Day proclamation, asking, "Who gave Washington the right to interfere in the affairs of our peoples?"

The Chautauqua Conference has also produced a one-hour documentary on Soviet Latvian television, which according to a review in the December 24, 1986 Latvian Communist Party newspaper *Cina* (Struggle) "proves that we must talk to the Americans and even argue with them" in order to establish a "point of contact." The review, however, criticizes the documentary for including too much on the "seven drummers" from America: "It really wasn't worth it to waste valuable minutes of film to promote 'yesterday's' nostalgia for our people's old and discarded times . . ." Employees of Latvian television have also been criticized publicly for repeatedly showing close-ups of the Latvian flag pins during the nightly broadcasts about the conference. During a radio interview, one staffer ingeniously explained, "We just wanted to show our viewers how the Americans were dressed."

What does all this mean? While Soviet criticism of Western Balts is not new, the fact that it is being presented to the occupied Latvian people with such frequency and in such revealing detail is remarkable. Some attribute it to a "fifth column" of Latvian nationalists in the media and even in Party ranks. (Many of the Latvian Communist Party members in the preselected audience at the Chautauqua Conference privately expressed support to the Latvian-American delegates.)

On the other hand, this rash of "openness" could be a result of Soviet confidence *vis-à-vis* the long-term stability of the Baltic States. While Latvian nationalism may be experiencing a spiritual resurgence, massive Russian immigration into the country has reduced the Latvian population to 53 percent. With the Latvian birth rate among the lowest in the Soviet Union, Latvians, unlike the rapidly multiplying Asiatic peoples in the south, do not pose a foreseeable threat to Russian rule. Moscow may also truly believe its own propaganda line that Washington's "Baltic policy" is nothing more than a political smokescreen designed to appease conservative public opinion in the United States. Jack Matlock's remarks in Latvia, although clearly annoying to the Soviets, weren't enough to prevent his recent approval as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Despite symbolic gestures and strong words on behalf of Baltic freedom, the business of superpower relations must go on; neither Balts nor the Soviets expect the Marines to land on the shores of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in the near future.

Nevertheless, the trend in Soviet Latvian rhetoric which began before last summer's Chautauqua Conference, and continues today, is toward a full frontal assault on the Baltic freedom movement in the West. As such, it gives this movement a markedly elevated stature in the eyes of the occupied Latvian people. Any Latvian who may have doubted the existence or effectiveness of Baltic organizations in the West has now had it confirmed, not only by the Latvian-Americans who attended the conference but by official Soviet spokesmen in the press, on television and radio: Baltic-American organizations are more powerful than ever, and U.S. support for the Balts, from the President on down, has never been stronger.

Those of us who work with Baltic organizations have been trying to convey this information to our countrymen for years. We never expected to get this kind of assistance from the Soviets' own propaganda machine. □

[1]While the Soviet Latvian press usually shies away from naming names, the article does mention Linas Kojelis, a 31-year-old American of Lithuanian descent who serves as Special Assistant to the President in the White House Public Liaison office. In the last year the Soviet Lithuanian press has launched a vitriolic barrage of attacks at Kojelis, who has become something of a folk hero in Lithuania. During a recent visit to Lithuania, Kojelis's father was asked by a local whether he was related to the "White House Kojelis." Not surprisingly, the Soviets rejected the younger Kojelis's visa application when he sought to participate in the Chautauqua Conference. Kojelis was the only Administration official to be refused entry into Latvia.

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THE NATION'S PULSE

LICHTER AND THE LIBERALS

by Tim W. Ferguson

Media bias is old hat. So much so that my boss frowns on the topic as fare for our paper's editorial page. Yet the subject is still drawing attention, thanks in part to the publication last year of *The Media Elite* by S. Robert Lichter and two colleagues.[1]

Mr. Lichter has come to New York City twice to discuss the book with a panel of critics, and about a hundred people showed up both times, so there may be some life left in the issue. That's not to say we're getting very far with it, however. At the two "discussions" I attended, the lotsa-heat-but-no-light cliché applied. (A more productive session, I'm told, was held at the American Enterprise Institute, with which Mr. Lichter is affiliated.)

What can be said is that Lichter & Co. have gotten under the press's skin. Consider who emerged on chilly nights to challenge the author in front of either a New York University journalism class in December or the Metropolitan Republican Club (!) in January: Carl Bernstein, once a noted muckraker; Steve Friedman, executive producer of the "Today" show; a corporate lawyer who formerly was vice chairman of the New York Times Co; Mortimer Zuckerman, of *U.S. News* and big buildings; newsroom sociologist Herbert J. Gans of Columbia; Jonathan Alter, the media critic for *Newsweek*; Marlene Sanders, who used to be on the TV news a lot; and the editor-in-chief of the *New York Daily News*.

These press people do seem to get bothered by the Lichter thesis, that elite journalists are culturally and psychologically—and measurably—disposed to bias their coverage. One reason the New York sessions were so unelucidating was their emotionalism. (Another is that audience members nearly always asked the type of questions you hear on call-in talk shows: baiting, uninformed, anecdotal if not apocryphal.)

Mr. Lichter, though he says he's not fond of left-right labels (everybody is against "labels"), comes across as a conservative's thinking man. Tall, young, usually even-keeled, he is the "good cop" to Reed Irvine's feisty, free-swinging media schtick. Mr. Lichter smiles his way through the basic spiel, avoiding the social-science methodology but not patronizing his listeners. He feigns umbrage pleasantly at each shot taken his way, and carefully stays in eye contact with the audience throughout, playing for support.

The unsophisticated assemblages I attended also brought out the showmen in the rest of the panels. I don't recall whether Carl Bernstein or Steve Friedman of "Today" led the NYU group in remonstrations and rolled eyes. James Goodale, the former New York Times Co. exec., wondered how in the world Mr. Lichter could imagine a cosmopolitan clique in the news business when Tom Brokaw, a former South Dakotan, walks around New York in "his old Marine boots." (The anchorman may prefer casualness, but he was never in the service.) Mr. Friedman (University of Illinois) and Marlene Sanders (Ohio State) boasted of their Midwestern backgrounds. A related role, the hardbitten newshound who wouldn't know an ideology if it jumped out of a VDT, was played at the second session by Gilman Spencer of the *Daily News*, who swore freely but did admit to having attended Groton.

I'm quite prepared to believe, and I think Mr. Lichter is prone to agree, that even many journalists in the prestige press are not conscious of being on the battle lines in an ideological war. This is the only way Mr. Lichter could have gotten many honest responses to his controversial media questionnaire on personal backgrounds and beliefs—a savvy sort would have anticipated the drift of the study. (Jonathan Alter of *Newsweek* said he believed many of the respondents did just that and answered outrageously.)

Still, ingenuousness is an inadequate defense from these folks. So is the quite different but also commonplace acknowledgment contained in Michael Kinsley's savaging of *The Media Elite* in the *New Republic*. "I don't quarrel with the straightforward polls showing that journalists vote liberal more often than the general population. The important question is, So what?" Journalists in general see themselves as "professionals" and put aside their biases in much the same way an attorney dutifully represents his clients.

Neither of those positions explains what media critics from the right have spotted as a tendency to be accommodationist in foreign policy, interventionist in economic policy, and antagonistic to some aspects of bourgeois morality and values. It's entirely understandable that a journalist could have all these leanings and not sense himself swimming outside the mainstream, as these are probably what he's been exposed to in the schools since an early age. But that doesn't change the fact of rather unquestioned acceptance of propositions such as the paramountcy of "arms control," the need to close gaps between rich and poor, the superiority of wilderness to development, or the silliness of objections to sex education. (Nor does it make any less valid the complaints of critics on the left that major media are ethnocentric, creatures of commercial hype, prisoners of a generally comfortable existence.)

Journalists usually have short time horizons and gravitate to the safe and conventional. On that score, a consensus of media critics can be obtained. But other failings that are admitted by the doubters of press bias are not the substitute explanation for skewed coverage that they are advanced to be. The press is adversarial, it is said. Yes, but not always. It was not adversarial to NASA all those years, because its sympathies were with that bureaucracy as they are with most non-military science agencies. It is not adversarial toward Jesse Jackson in the way it is toward Jerry Falwell. The press likes conflict, it is said, and will seem to promote the antagonists. This is usually true, but doesn't explain the difference in treatment of, say, a Howard Metzenbaum and a Jesse Helms. And the press is sensationalist, as each reporter competes for space and air time and the various news organs compete with each other. Once again, true . . . and yet: What might explain the extraordinarily restrained and compassionate manner in which the AIDS epidemic and its roster of casualties have been treated, relative to other frightening cases of mortality?

Some intelligent skeptics of the idea of ideological bias in the media, such as Mr. Alter of *Newsweek*, say that instead of trying to find some political strain in the reporting, we'd be better off examining individual instances of coverage with an eye to some of those just-mentioned frailties, as well as general laziness and incompetence. Mr. Alter takes particular exception to Lichter's attempt to quantify the slant of a set of stories or to put together a psychological profile of those who produce them. I think he is right and wrong. Thorough examination of the coverage of a particular story, performed with a minimum of ideological coloration, indeed can be an effective teaching and reinforcing device within the craft. It was seen, in

[1] *The Media Elite: America's New Powerbrokers*, by S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda S. Lichter. Adler & Adler, $19.95. Reviewed by Michael A. Scully in the January 1987 *American Spectator*.

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the heyday of the National News Council, to have some direct benefit to the society as a whole. But to accept this as the sum total of press review is to concede the argument before it has been settled (or settled to widespread satisfaction). Surely no persistent ideological bias will be found if the ground rules won't permit looking for it: that is, if individual cases can't be aggregated into whatever pattern they might show. The remedies to excess or indulgence in the future will be limited to "having a cop on every street corner," or in this case a wise editor in every newsroom on every call. Whereas, if the problem is found to be more systemic, remedial steps can be taken. A. M. Rosenthal has acknowledged that he acted during his reign at the *New York Times* to bring the paper back toward the center politically.

I believe any discerning person can quantify bias (though the measurements will vary—more on that shortly). At times it can be difficult to evaluate the stories reporters and editors chose *not* to cover vs. those they did, but toting up what ran or aired is not an invalid way. Good reporters know they often are called on to do stories that, while intrinsically sound, are more likely to displease one side in a contentious matter than another. The expectation is that, over time, the coverage should more or less even out or at least reflect the objective merits of the respective positions. Why this type of scorecard, which many a fair-minded reporter keeps in his head anyway, should strike journalists as outrageous in the way it seems to have affected Mr. Lichter's critics, I don't know.

Measuring bias within a particular story is not such a chore at all. Initially, there's the question of representation (through accurate quotation, one hopes). A competent news organization will have included comments from the obviously involved parties to a story. But that's hardly the end of it. Indeed, the key to bias in a feature or interpretive account—and by this I refer to virtually all packages from broadcast correspondents and to newspaper stories that begin with a "soft" lead paragraph and end with a real ending—is to note how it begins or how the issue is framed, and how it ends: the emphasis or lilt in the TV "close" or the writer's use, quite often, of a summary quotation. From this "spin" I believe you can in most instances ascertain, if not the journalist's outlook, at least the point intended to be drawn from the exercise. This is not a brilliant insight.

So now where, in my simplified setting of media analysis, does this leave us? It leaves us with a count. Lichter et al. at this point chose a method acceptable to them as social scientists to put this count in perspective. For a neutral indicator, they surveyed "experts" in the various fields relating to the news coverage they were measuring. For example, they queried nuclear scientists about stories on nuclear-plant dangers. (They found them a good deal less worried than the press coverage.) Critics of *The Media Elite* have brought out obvious problems here. A big one is specialist bias through self-selection. People who choose to devote their lives to nuclear science would, you'd think, tend to want to promote the development of the technology. Personally, I'd give a lot of credence to their views on reactor safety, but I'd be a lot more skeptical where other aspects of nuclear power (economics, sociology) are concerned. Likewise, I'd be hesitant to evaluate coverage of abortion based on the standard of responses from ob-gyns (although I might be surprised).

As suggested earlier, press monitoring is really a game any knowledgeable person can play, and to our mutual advantage. I'd forgo the search for objective standards, and accept a major criticism lodged against the Lichter study: that it is an ideological critique of the media. Let's all be ideologues, if that's what you want to call it, and take this matter out of the arena of science (or pseudo-science) and put it into politics, where it belongs.

All persons with a professional or passionate interest in holding the press to the straight and narrow should be welcomed. Heaven knows, they are already out there today, mostly taking random pot shots. In his annual media guide, Jude Wanniski, the supply-side popularist, assembles a more thoroughgoing rating of journalists based on how they keep up with the current policy debate—as he sees the debate. Let others be as systematic about it, and more overtly biased if they wish. There's no more need for licensing these critics than for licensing the press itself. We can trust the public to consider the source, whether that person or entity has an academic interest in the news or, like the press critic of this journal, a material one.

One of the best ways a voter of limited search time has to evaluate legislative candidates these days is to compare the multitude of ratings made of the various representatives based on their voting records. None of these scorecards is completely fair, but the composite picture drawn from all of them is instructive, particularly when the sample is large and we're more or less familiar with the biases of the evaluating groups. I say, bring on the same for the media, and let the content watchers quantify bias to their heart's content. □

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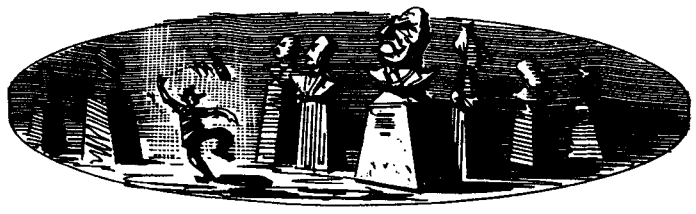

HOUSE PORKER

by David Brooks

Because God made only one Mississippi River, Jamie Whitten was forced to overrule Him. Though he doesn't make the papers, Whitten is one of the most important men in Washington. The senior member of the House of Representatives, he was first elected when Pearl Harbor was just a gleam in General Tojo's eye. Nicknamed the permanent secretary of agriculture, he has dominated the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture for the past thirty-five years. Now chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, he leads the body that substantially determines where federal money goes and why. Prince of the pork barrelers, he helped build a second Mississippi River with federal funds.

It is called the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway. It cuts a 234-mile trench in northeast Mississippi, through Jamie Whitten's district. Bigger than the Panama Canal, it cost $1.8 billion, a sum which appalled other members of Congress, especially so because nobody knew why the canal was being built, except that Jamie Whitten and Mississippi Senator John Stennis wanted it.

The story goes around Capitol Hill that one congressman, Joel Pritchard of Seattle, launched a campaign against the Tenn-Tom. But as his effort was getting underway Mt. St. Helens erupted, spewing ash and destruction onto his state. Whitten decided that the incident would have to undergo thorough study before federal relief money could be sent in. His interest in geology proved to be short-lived, however, when Pritchard soon backed off on his challenge to Tenn-Tom. The federal aid was dispatched to Seattle, and in January 1985, the Tenn-Tom Waterway, one of the biggest boondoggles in federal history, was completed. "Tenn-Tom hasn't paid a whole lot of dividends in northeast Mississippi," says Gary Matland, editorial-page editor at a local paper, the *Daily Corinthian*, but Mississippians remain "cautiously optimistic" that all those federal dollars will have an impact someday.

Whitten's signature is his mumble. Forty-five years in Washington haven't diluted that Mississippi drawl. His sentences burst forth like buckshot, but quickly fade into a series of semi-audible reverberations. Barney Frank, who has a speech impediment, once joked that he and Jamie Whitten would be the two biggest beneficiaries of bilingual education. Opposing legislators, fed up with Whitten's incoherence, complain that Whitten should come with his own translator.

A number of people who work around him insist that Whitten is a genuine idiot; nobody, they say, could affect stupidity so masterfully. But those who know him better insist Whitten manipulates his mumble to best advantage. When asked about his latest amendment to an appropriations bill, he shambles forth with a long series of half-chewed words that glaze the eyes of his listeners. If the subject is a chunk of especially self-serving agricultural pork, he will drone on and on about the beauty of the land and the nobility of the farmer, sounding like some Jeffersonian gone delirious. His colleagues nod in confusion and vote yes. Only later, if at all, do they understand which one of Whitten's schemes they have just supported.

"It's just torture to sit there and understand what the man is saying," says somebody who has to work with him closely. Nevertheless, during the Carter presidency, Whitten delivered 1,811 projects to his district, totaling $1.27 billion in direct aid and another $50 million in loan guarantees.

He is also the master of the quick gavel. A year or so ago two Republicans found themselves confused about a key committee vote. It was clear that they had voted opposite the way they intended. Whitten noticed and gaveled the vote to a close. The two members protested but Whitten said it was too late to change. A few years earlier, one staffer remembers, he gave a quick gavel to George O'Brien, who was then battling a fatal illness, and doing his best to fulfill his duties. Some observers found the episode extremely offensive.

Sneaky? Richard Bolling, the retired Democrat from Missouri, told Jonathon Rauch of the *National Journal*, "I think he's one big puddle of sneak." And here Whitten stands in telling contrast to the current stereotype of the media-hungry congressman. In forty-five years, he has never held a press conference. His press releases are as frequent as Halley's comet. Recently I asked his press secretary (who must be lonelier than a Maytag repair man) for some newsletters Whitten had sent home to the district. Finally, he produced a two-year-old sheet, mostly white space, that mentioned a few of Whitten's recent projects—a weather station, airport improvements, roads, federally funded tourist attractions—and not much else. "He's not a very high profile person," says Joe Rutherford, an editor at the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*. "He won't campaign the way other people do. He'll attend a couple of fish fries if people throw them for him. He'll answer constituent letters. He's rather withdrawn." Last fall a survey revealed that only 34 percent of the people in Jamie Whitten's district recognize their Congressman's name—that after four decades of service.

Whitten is a workhorse, dedicated more to the well-being of congressional institutions than he is to any set of ideas. He is one of the most astute observers of the ever-changing and, it seems, ever-deteriorating federal budget process. He resembles more a lawyer, steering his way through the intricacies of the process, than a legislator. In fact, he opened that 1984 newsletter with this job description: "The real title of the position I hold is 'Representative in Congress.' This is somewhat like being a lawyer who tries a lawsuit. A lawyer who doesn't recognize when the conditions and jury have changed is not much of a lawyer." Whitten uses his expertise to manipulate the budget for the sake of his

David Brooks writes on politics for National Review *and the* Washington Times.

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clients. "When somebody mentions Jamie Whitten in our district, you think of two things, Tenn-Tom and highway 72," says Gary Matland. Philosophic labels don't make sense on congressmen like Jamie Whitten.

In the mid-1970s it became clear that the Appropriations Committee chair was about to be vacated by George Mahon, who had brought honor to the position since 1964. Whitten realized how much he could help his district as chairman. But all committee chairmen must be elected by the Democratic Caucus, and Whitten's record—he voted against Medicare, food stamps, welfare programs, and in 1956 signed the segregationist Southern Manifesto—was offensive to the party's liberal majority. So he changed his mind on those issues. His Americans for Conservative Action rating declined from 91 in 1972 to 28 a decade later. His support from labor rose inversely. He became a reliable ally to Tip O'Neill, voting against aid to the contras and for the ERA. Though Ronald Reagan won his district easily in 1984, Whitten backs the President less than anybody else in the Mississippi delegation, only 33 percent of the time in 1985.

Whitten's Appropriations Committee is charged with allocating the broad spending targets set by the Budget Committees. The Appropriations bills are written very quickly (because the Budget Committees don't finish their work until late in the fiscal year). There is little press coverage (because few readers are interested, and fewer reporters understand the process), and the bills must always pass (if there are no appropriations, government closes down). In this mess, Whitten thrives.

For the past several years, the process has been even more muddled. Unable to complete its budget-making on time, Congress has had to rely on Continuing Resolutions, massive stopgap funding measures that keep the government in operation. This year's CR accounts for over $500 billion, and it was written by a small group of appropriators led by Jamie Whitten. Last September, the halls outside the House Appropriations Committee were packed with agency representatives, lobbyists, and special interest arm-twisters as Whitten's committee divvied up fiscal year 1987. "There may be ten people in [Congress] who know what's in it," Rep. David Obey told *Congressional Quarterly*, "and that's the way we run the government for a year."

In that fast and furious atmosphere, spending programs pile on fast. Rep. Silvio Conte called the 1985 CR "753 pages of primal urge." Rep. William Dannemeyer vented his frustration on the floor: "This continuing resolution illustrates the maxim that runs through all of them. I do not think there is a big enough trough in Christendom to accommodate the snouts that seek to feed at the public's expense." Even Whitten seemed a bit ashamed. He began his defense of the bill by saying, "I just work here."

Whitten is not the biggest spender in Congress—far from it. He boasts that his appropriations are often below White House requests. But, as usual, Whitten isn't being completely candid. In the first place, his committee is most concerned with budget authority, paper spending allocations, and it sometimes acts as if outlays, actual spending, were somebody else's problem. This does not change the fact that outlays often exceed budget authority, no matter how much they are papered down. Second, Whitten finagles with the mix of spending, shifting defense dollars into water projects, or energy-related pork. Then, of course, there are other tricks. Whitten brags that his annual agricultural spending bills cost less than presidential requests, but often he redirects money away from essential price supports towards pet spending programs. When the money for the essentials runs out midway through the next fiscal

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year, the Administration has to come back and ask for a supplemental appropriation.

Members in committee constantly joke about the level of pork in their bills. Whitten stares down at his desk and grins. Pork is one thing he is candid about. Aboveboard and shameless, he'll promise support for a colleague's pork in exchange for support for his own. How could something so routine be wrong?

In the corrosive pedantocracy that is the congressional budget process congressmen grow less conscious of distinctions between pork barrel spending and substantive spending. Is Strom Thurmond's Rural Electrification pork or community development? Is Orrin Hatch's Jobs Corps pork or workfare? To many congressmen, the question is irrelevant. They prefer Jamie Whitten's maxim, "Pork is what's in the other fellow's district." And when it comes to national programs they fall back on another of Whitten's maxims: "The whole country is in somebody's district," the obvious corollary being: Go ahead, spend.

Each cut of pork gets yelped through Congress with assurances that it will create jobs and restore prosperity. But Jamie Whitten's own district illustrates the bankruptcy of these expectations. For all his efforts, it ranks 427th out of 436 congressional districts in per capita income. His home county, Tallahatchie, is among the poorest in the United States. Nevertheless, Whitten captured 66 percent of the vote in the 1986 election.

Tom Edsell, an academic and an associate editor at the *Southern Partisan*, has kept tabs on Whitten for a number of years. Last fall he migrated from his home in South Carolina to manage the Republican effort to oust the congressman. "There is a kind of patient, Job-like despair down here," he says. "The thing that interests me is the failure of these people even to have any sense of hope or indignation about any of this. They just don't seem to think there is anything they can do about it. They go out and vote for the man. What they are doing is licking the spoon. It tastes pretty good and they know that's all there is. They don't bother to know who he is or to get mad at him." □

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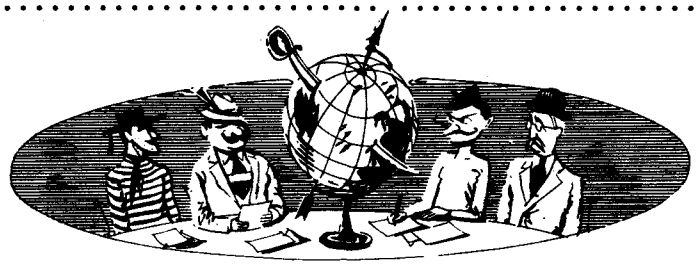

MORE HISTORY

by Amity Shlaes

West German conservatives were thinking big as they moved through the last weeks before the general election on January 25. Their last large-scale campaign rally was so giant they had difficulty finding a structure in this narrow republic roomy enough to accommodate it. In the end, they settled for a multi-stadium complex in Dortmund known as the "Deutschland Halle." Fifty-five thousand citizens from Berlin to Aachen to Lake Constance rode 355 buses and fifteen chartered trains through Sunday-morning sleet to attend. The crowds mingled in a cheery fog of beer and pea soup and milled admiringly past baby-blue stands honoring the national economic achievement. They stamped their feet on wood floors when Helmut Kohl and other cabinet members from the ruling party, the Christian Democratic Union, arrived, and cheered their round-headed leader with low, solid rumbles of "Hel-Moot, Hel-Moot."

It was when powerhouse conservative Franz Josef Strauss, prime minister of Bavaria, wandered onto the subject of national pride and the years 1933-1945 that trouble came. "Germany is more than those times," he intoned. A young man shrieked something incomprehensible from the middle of the floor at the leader; he hurled what looked like a handkerchief in Mr. Strauss's direction. It took a pack of security guards and five minutes before the overheated hall recovered its complacent mood.

Helmut Kohl's government has problems handling this country's history. In his last administration Kohl embarked on an interesting and somewhat undirected campaign to relieve this truncated nation's national consciousness. The campaign mostly focused on the series of 40-year anniversaries marking the end of World War II. The most successful of the projects was a mollifying, Santayana-ish speech about remembering the past by President Richard von Weizsäcker on May 8, 1985; the most egregious of them, in Western eyes at least, was Mr. Kohl's decision to take the reluctant Ronald Reagan to honor German war dead at Bitburg. Even before January's election, plans were under way to go beyond ceremony and make these policies concrete. The government will allocate funding towards a pair of national museums, and it hopes to develop prouder views of the German past throughout German cultural life, from grammar schools to history books.

At first glance the conservatives' steps don't seem unduly controversial. In the early postwar years, the twelve-year "1000 Year Reich" was taboo. Then student protestors of the 1960s and 1970s used it to spice up their attacks on incumbent governments; the authority of the Federal Republic, they claimed, was "fascist." Today, as the number of Germans who can speak about the period from adult experience diminishes, establishing an acceptable official line becomes important. But lately the Christian Democrats' message about "getting over the past" has taken on an unattractively brassy tone. The result is growing resistance from a variety of fronts, among them the opposition Social Democrats, the flourishing ecologist Green party, and some historians, who charge that the government is irretrievably damaging national memory by trivializing the National Socialist crime for rightist political purposes. "If I were a German, I would scream," says the Israeli ambassador to Bonn, Yitzak Ben Ari, of the recent rightward rhetoric. The same ambassador had applauded the earlier speech by President von Weizsäcker.

The mission, in Strauss's words, is to end the period where Germans live "continually under the shadow of the Third Reich." Germans, he argues, need no longer feel guilty about the trains that rolled to the camps. They need to build a strong national identity to survive in Europe; a confident Germany is imperative for a strong Western Alliance. Much of the new

Amity Shlaes is editorial features editor of the Wall Street Journal/Europe.

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mood is attributed to Erlangen historian Michael Stürmer, an adviser to Kohl who is said to have convinced the chancellor of the importance of the new task. The national newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, quoted a CDU official as saying that "Kohl has turned from a European to a German." Such historical confidence is also a handy tool in the prestidigitation the Kohl government is frequently forced to perform regarding the German reunification question. To turn attention away from the present split, it helps to recall a time when Germany was one nation.

The first signs of the battle came with the arrival of new comparisons of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, a parallel which has been taboo in West Germany since the 1960s. One early participant in the discussion was Franz M. Oppenheimer, whose article on the question of German guilt, "Treacherous Signposts: The Perils of Misreading Germany's Past," which first appeared in the November 1985 *American Spectator*, was reprinted last May by the prestigious conservative daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.[1] Oppenheimer noted that "the stench and gore of the Gulag, the deaths of slave laborers during the construction of the Siberian pipeline, are not permitted to intrude into discussions . . ." Historian Ernst Nolte then picked up the fight. His essay, "The Past That Will Not Pass Away," appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in June, around the time the conservatives won a state election that started them rolling toward national victory. Nolte argued that the mass murder perpetrated by the Nazis was to some extent built on the model of Stalin's murders in the Gulag. Hitler, Nolte felt, was frightened by the Stalinist regime: "You have to imagine," he quotes Hitler as having said of the instruments of Russian torture, "what happens to an officer who gets put in their rat cage." The consequence was that Hitler imitated what he feared. Another historian, Andreas Hillgruber, presented the same argument in a more oblique form when he published a book with the explosive (in Germany) title, *Two Kinds of Destruction: The Destruction of the Third Reich and the End of European Jewry.*

The response to such equation was outrage—to some extent correctly so. One of the German left-wing's biggest guns, philosopher Jürgen Habermas, took up the case. In several articles in *Die Zeit*, Germany's answer to the *New York Review of Books*, he charged that the conservatives were advocating a national *Entsorgung*, an "unburdening," of the National Socialist past. Such relativism, used to political ends, was dangerous, even in a nation where the grandchildren of the criminals were now to lead the nation. "Does responsibility fall to the next generation, and the generation after that? . . . The answer is yes." As heir to the distinguished Frankfurt school, founded earlier this century by philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, as well as the intellectual symbol for many of the protests of the 1960s, the white-haired Habermas commands widespread respect among West German intellectuals. His reasoned argument is fortified by personal conviction —although not Jewish himself, for example, he has given his daughters the Jewish names of Judith and Rebekka.

On the political level, the Kohl government has failed to match the sophistication and sincerity of the academic discussion. President von Weizsäcker's speech—"Whoever refuses to remember the inhumanity is prone to new risks of infection"—was so impressive that nearly a million Germans requested copies within three months after he'd delivered it. But more often, the party's responses have been unreconstructedly reactionary. CDU politicians, and, more particularly, members of the CDU's southern sister party, the Christian Social Union, have occasionally issued statements about German history that can't be called anything but lies, grotesque and downright. This began as early as 1983, when conservative luminary Bruno Heck wrote that "the [student] rebellion of 1968 destroyed more values than the Third Reich did. Overcoming [that rebellion] is thus more important than overcoming Hitler once again." Later Alfred Dregger, CDU party whip in the Bundestag, announced that what ended in 1945 "had already begun in 1914," and heaped blame on other European countries in a version of the stab-in-the-back tirade so dusty it could have been lifted from a Weimar salon.

Even Chancellor Kohl's own performance sometimes verged on the shameful. Most of the problems come from his indecision over whom he'd prefer to court, Washington or Moscow. In a now-famous interview with *Newsweek* magazine last fall, he felt comfortable likening Mikhail Gorbachev's propaganda skills to those of Joseph Goebbels. Back in Germany, though, he had second thoughts and let his press spokesman attack *Newsweek* for misrepresenting him, even though Kohl's staff okayed the interview transcript before publication. At Dortmund, Kohl did it again, suggesting in a speech to party members that there were concentration camps in East Germany. But after criticism from the East, he qualified his statement to the press. From the American point of view, the price he paid for these remarks isn't particularly high—East German leader Erich Honecker, for example "canceled" a visit he'd already postponed for years. But within détente-conscious Germany, such vacillation and its results have only discredited the chancellor.

The attitude conservatives claim to undo is a tenacious one. In a nation where the common verb "to lead" (*führen*) still retains a strongly negative connotation, the "anti-authoritarian" movement that swept Europe and the U.S. during the sixties and seventies packed an unusually effective punch. The result is that for years German children from first grade to university have been taught two lessons: Moscow isn't as bad as America thinks, and National Socialism was a consequence of capitalism. Thus the Kohl government is fighting what to Americans would seem to be a nation of intellectuals circa 1968. Sit down for a beer with a German sociology student nowadays, and he'll tell you how the American arms industry started World War II. And this is why the German conservatives, however clumsy or uncouth, deserve support. Once the museums are up, the school books written, and the speeches made, Germans can to some extent turn to other, less politicized concerns.

Time is short, however, partly because of pressures within the CDU. The governing coalition's victory in this January's election was weaker than expected—small, extreme, rightist parties made important gains in some states. After its disappointing showing, the government may have more trouble getting through legislation that will

[1]Mr. Oppenheimer's essay has also been reprinted in a new collection, *Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German and Jewish History*, edited by Ilya Levkov (Shapolsky Publishing, Inc., 56 East 11th St., New York, NY 10003; $29.95, $17.95 paper).

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put history to rest. It may also overreact and even render West Germany less democratic. Most in danger is Germany's liberal immigration and refugee law, laid into place when the Allies and Germans wrote the postwar constitution. The Bavarian Strauss, for example, has said he wants a constitutional amendment to make it harder to enter Germany. He won't be able to lobby the two-thirds majority needed for that amendment, but he may be able to continue to block immigration procedurally. The comforting silhouette of Richard von Weizsäcker has improved the German image significantly. But even von Weizsäcker could be somewhat threatened: to be reelected in 1989, he needs votes from the right side of his party, too.

It may well be that German conservatives are grappling with history today because they neglected it earlier. Konrad Adenauer, the national father, was too busy supervising the clearing of rubble and worrying about the Soviets in Berlin to set a strong line on the Nazi past; and the public was still smarting too much to listen in any case. So the job has fallen on Adenauer's self-proclaimed heir, the somewhat bumbling but well-meaning Helmut Kohl. The chancellor's adviser on the modern history reforms, Michael Stürmer, offered some words that are on the right track: "In a land without history, he who fills memory, defines the concepts, and interprets the past, wins the future." □

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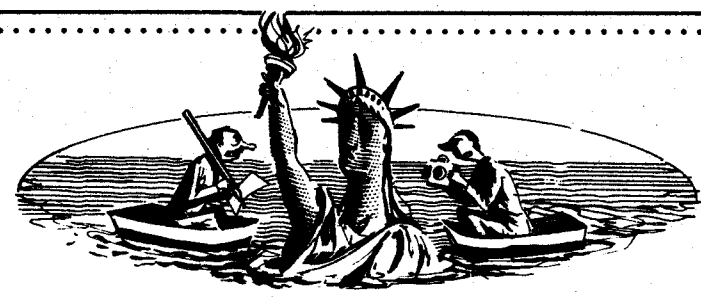

A SELECTIVE BUNCH

by Michael Ledeen

Woodward Rides Again

The Iran/contra story, which by now has left the American public with terminally glazed eyes (they can't remember all the names, the stories all seem to blend into one another, and the quantity of air time and ink seems disproportionate to the "news"), has become the personal crusade of the *Washington Post*. No other newspaper in the world—including *Pravda*—comes anywhere near to the *Post* in its daily regurgitation of already-established information in new formats. For a while I wondered what was going on, but I think I am beginning to understand. The *Post* is determined that this story shall not die, and that it shall destroy this Administration. In order to do this, the *Post* must maintain the appearance of daily revelations, whether or not there actually are any. So it was, that when I picked up the *Post*, on February 8, I found perhaps the archetypal story of the genre, written, of course, by the great helmsman, Bob Woodward, steering in tandem with David Hoffman.

"BUSH TOLD U.S. ARMS DEALS WERE WITH IRAN RADICALS," the headline screamed. To read the story by Woodward and Hoffman, you would think that the President's entire account of the Iran affair had been shown to be false. Their story was based on the discovery of a Top Secret/Sensitive Memorandum of Conversation between Vice President George Bush and Mr. Amiram Nir, who served as the personal representative of Prime Minister Peres during much of the Iran/contra operations. Listen to the first two paragraphs:

> A key Israeli official involved in the sale of U.S. arms to Iran told Vice President Bush last summer that "we are dealing with the most radical elements" in Iran because "we've learned they can deliver and the moderates can't," according to a top secret memo written by Bush's chief of staff.
>
> The description of the Iran effort provided by the Israeli official, Amiram Nir, contradicts the claim by President Reagan that he was dealing with Iranian "moderates" in sending the weapons to Tehran.

Then, further down in the story, comes another alleged body blow to the Administration's case:

> What Nir told Bush . . . also undermines the Israeli Government's repeated claims that it played only a minor and passive role in the dealings with Iran. Nir is quoted as saying of the Israelis, "We activated the channel; we gave a front to the operation; provided a physical base, provided aircraft."

As usual with the *Post*, and especially with Woodward's exegesis of secret texts, the quotations are accurate enough but they do not prove the points made in the article. To take the last point first, Nir's recounting of the Israeli actions in the earliest phases of the story adds nothing to what was already known—indeed what had already been announced by the President himself. For Reagan had said—or perhaps he "clarified"—that a "third country" (Israel) had made the actual deliveries of arms in the early autumn of 1985. And it is clear from the memorandum that Nir was talking about this period.

The first point is rather more interesting, for while it is quite true that Nir told the Vice President that contacts had been established with the radicals for the purpose of gaining the release of American hostages, immediately following in the memorandum we find Nir saying something of signal importance, which was neatly omitted from Woodward and Hoffman's analysis. Here is the full paragraph:

> Nir [said]: "We are dealing with the most radical elements. The deputy prime minister is an emissary. They can deliver . . . that's for sure. They were called yesterday and thanked and today more phone calls. This is good because we've learned they can deliver and the moderates can't. We should think about diversity and establish other contacts with other factions. We have started to establish contact with some success and now more success is expected since if these groups feel if the extremes are in contact with us then it is less risky for the other groups . . .

In other words, the contacts with the radicals were recent, and until then the contacts had in fact been with moderates. Moreover, the policy of contacting the radicals was helpful not only in freeing American hostages, but also in enabling the Americans and the Israelis to establish contacts across the full spectrum of Iranian politics.

Now one may admire or condemn this policy, but it is certainly wrong, on the basis of the memorandum reprinted in the *Post*, to accuse the President of hypocrisy and Israel of lying. If anything, the memo lends considerable support to the claims of the Israeli and American governments.

If Woodward and Hoffman had wanted to level a serious charge against the President, there was one right in front of their noses: the memo shows without doubt that there was a clear program to swap weapons for hostages, even though there was also a longer-term objective. ("It is important that we have assets there 2 to 3 years out when change occurs. We have no real choice than to proceed.") This is a matter well worth discussing, for it shows how a limited, tactical objective (saving some hostages) overwhelmed a serious, strategic goal (finding ways to improve American influence in Iran, and moving towards better working relations between the two countries). That is the real tragedy in the Iran story, as the memo shows: the policy started with the establishment of contacts with moderates, and ended by working with radicals to save the hostages.

In terms of real news, there was only one truly new piece of information in the memorandum: that Bush had received such a detailed briefing. And this indeed suggests that he was less than forthcoming when he spoke of this matter.

It is hard to judge journalists' motives, but it's equally hard to avoid the suspicion that Woodward, Hoffman, and the aggressive editors down on 15th St. were delighted to have a genuine Top Secret/Sensitive document in their hands, and wanted to exploit it to the hilt. They weren't entirely sure what it all meant, but there were a few phrases there which looked like they could be used to attack the Administration. So they hammered away. Just like the *Soldier of Fortune* T-Shirt says, "Kill 'em All; Let God Sort Them Out." They should have been more selective.

Sin of the Month

I am guilty of a sin of omission on na-

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tional television, and wish to apologize for it. It took place on a special edition of "Nightline," on December 18, and it was the first occasion I had had to discuss the Administration's Iran policy. Just before "Nightline," there had been an hour-long "special" edition of "20/20," on which Barbara Walters had made a series of statements about me that were factually mistaken, and at a certain point on "Nightline," Ted Koppel gave me the chance to correct the record, which I did. One of the points that had been made on "20/20" was that our Iran policy had been, *from the very beginning*, involved with arms and hostages, and I was at pains to say, *inter alia*, "I never, at any time, with any Israeli or any Iranian, ever raised questions of hostages or weapons." The point I wished to make, as I said in answer to a later question from Barbara Walters, was that

the point from the United States was always Iran, and that's an important thing to keep in mind. What we were looking for was Iran and what was going on in Iran. And the question, as will ultimately emerge when the story is told, of hostages, weapons and so forth, came later, and it emerged out of discussions with Iranians about Iran, and about the relationship between the United States and Iran.

All quite true, but misleading. For I had left the impression (unintentionally, to be sure) that while, at some hazy time in the future, someone had spoken about hostages and weapons with Iranians, I had not. What I should have said was that while, at the outset, I had been discussing Iran and related subjects, at a later date I found myself in meetings with Israelis and Iranians at which the subjects of weapons and hostages were discussed (albeit not in terms of a direct swap) . . . and how!

So I owe Ted Koppel and Barbara Walters an apology. Sorry.

Space Wars

While an incredible amount of ink and airtime is devoted to "Star Wars," and we go through our ritual dance of self-criticism on the awful failure of *Challenger*, we are in danger of overlooking the long-term contest with the Soviet Union in space. A medal, therefore, to the *San Francisco Examiner*, which ran a concise, thoughtful, and serious article on January 31 dealing with the latest Soviet successes, and the parallel American failures in maintaining an ongoing space program. The theme of the story struck me as just about right: the old contest between the (Soviet) tortoise and the (American) hare. While we constantly work for the very latest technology (and get bored with last year's models), the Soviets plod ahead with relatively clumsier but still workable technology, and move ahead in the race. Above all, the Soviets are willing to stand by their programs, regardless of temporary distractions: "Unlike the United States, the Soviets have a 'deep, long-range commitment to spaceflight' and plan funding years in advance rather than let it fluctuate with the political winds."

Similar themes were developed by *L'Express* in France, in its February 6 issue. The headlines said it all: "*Challenger* explodes, *Ariane* fails and the USSR colonizes the suburbs of the earth"; "100 missiles per year take off from the cosmodromes"; "76% of the satellites are launched by the East"; "The only two stations in orbit are Soviet." Here are some real headlines, and a real bottom line: "Four years ago, the Americans developed the concept of strategic defense, nicknamed 'Star Wars.' This technological concept that drives the Pentagon underlines better than any other the true nature of the space race. Just as in the last century, when the maritime powers reigned over the earth, the domination of space will provide the basis for the power of the sovereigns of the next millennium." □

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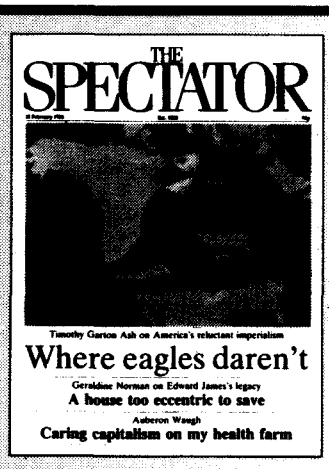
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THESPIANS AND SPECIMENS

by Bruce Bawer

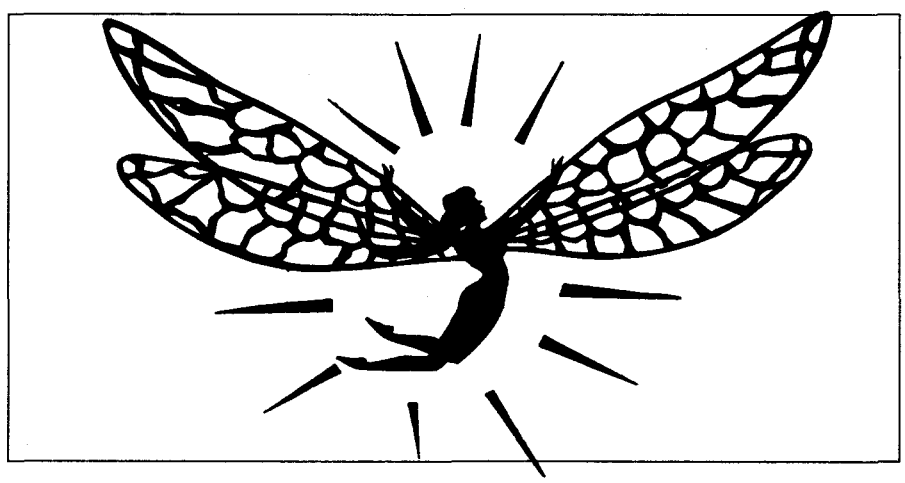
Outrageous Fortune (as in "slings and arrows of . . .") combines several familiar motifs. It is a clash-of-two-incongruous-characters movie (like *The Odd Couple*) that turns into an innocents-caught-up-in-international-intrigue adventure comedy (like *Silver Streak*), and, somewhere along the way, also becomes a buddy picture (like *Butch Cassidy*). Refreshingly, the opposites-turned-buddies in this case are both women—actresses, in fact, though of very different kinds. Lauren (Shelley Long), a stuck-up rich girl, is an aspiring classical thespian who wants to play Hamlet; Sandy (Bette Midler) is a crude and raucous porno diva. The two of them, classmates in a Manhattan acting class taught by a great Russian acting teacher (Robert Prosky), can't stand each other, but when their mutual boyfriend, Michael (Peter Coyote), mysteriously disappears, they team up to search for him. Before they know it, they're on their way to New Mexico, with both CIA and KGB operatives nipping at their heels.

The pairing of Long and Midler sounds like a promising idea, but before their first sequence together is over you realize you've seen it all before: what this is, really, is *Cheers: The Movie* with Long playing a variation on her Diane Chambers character, Midler (in yet another rerun of her tacky-bimbo act) taking the place of Carla the waitress as Diane's loud, vulgar foil, and Peter Coyote replacing Ted Danson as the primary object of their rivalry. This is not to write the film off entirely: Midler, after all, is always good for a few laughs, no matter what happens to be in the script or who happens to be behind the camera, and there are sequences in which she and Long play off each other to truly amusing effect.

Nor is it to say that Leslie Dixon's screenplay is worthlessly derivative: indeed, there are some very funny lines here—or, rather, lines that *would* have been very funny, if only they'd been directed properly. But the film's director, Arthur Hiller—who is, I think, most responsible for *Outrageous Fortune*'s weaknesses—just throws them away. This is Hiller's forte. Whereas some directors can take complicated pieces of material and turn them into lucid, coherent, effortless-looking films, Hiller (whose previous films include *Making Love* and *Silver Streak*) specializes in taking a relatively straightforward script and turning it into a confused, cluttered mess in which the tone wobbles, the characters never come into focus, and the jokes get lost in the shuffle. Likewise, whereas some directors rise above the clichés inherent in their material, Hiller manages—indeed, one cannot help feeling, at times, that he tries his damnedest—to make everything in his films seem as pallid and contrived as possible. Thus Hiller fails to make us believe in either Sandy or Lauren's affection for Michael, or to make the evolution of the ladies' relationship from mutual loathing to loyal friendship seem anything more than the cliché that it is.

One looks in vain, in a Hiller film, for a sense of style, of drama, of character, of humor, of pace—let alone visual interest or imagination or *joie de vivre*. He directs with a light head and a heavy hand. Alas, the only tried-and-true way to entertain oneself while watching a Hiller film is to tote up the missed opportunities—the failures, on Hiller's part, to exploit promising possibilities in the script. Dixon plainly meant *Outrageous Fortune*, for instance, to be in large part a meditation on acting; he simultaneously makes fun of the solemn pretenses of Lauren and her acting teacher, celebrates the sheer magic of dramatic illusions, and smiles at the outlandishness of his own plot (as well as its distance from Shakespeare, who is invoked at the film's beginning and end, and whose plays were, of course, themselves rich with meditations on reality, illusion, and the actor's art). But—though it's all there in the script—this thematic subtext fails to take shape, to take flight, in the actual film. To watch this flimsy farce is to have nightmares about what *Tootsie* would have been like with Arthur Hiller at the helm.

Several years ago, Ross McElwee, an independent North Carolina-born filmmaker residing in Boston, received a $9,000 grant to make a documentary about General William Tecumseh Sherman's march to the sea and its lasting effects upon American society. But when he went South to begin work on the film, McElwee, who had just been abandoned by his girlfriend, found himself using his newly bought film stock to record the conversations and activities of his family and friends—and, in particular, of the series of unattached young women into whose company he insinuated himself and his camera over the ensuing year. The film that resulted is a hilarious piece of *cinéma vérité* about contemporary Southern women and the frustrations of romance. It is also, of course, about Ross McElwee, who claims to be enamored of each of these young women, but who apparently never puts his camera down, even when they're gently explaining why they don't love him, even when they're packing to leave, even when they're backing out of the driveway and driving out of his life.



In all, unless I lost count, there are seven of these young ladies: (1) a none-too-bright aspiring actress and model who thinks that if only she can meet Burt Reynolds, he will fall in love with her and put her in a movie; (2) an interior designer who matter-of-factly converses about *Revelations* and the imminent Apocalypse, and who introduces McElwee to a community of survivalists; (3) a wholesome folk singer who, after spending a few weeks being courted by McElwee, confesses that she is a Mormon and wants to marry a man of God; (4) a lice-ridden linguist who lives alone, in primitive, hermit-like fashion, on one of Georgia's Sea Islands; (5) a rock-and-roll performer; (6) an ex-girlfriend of McElwee's who is a lawyer; and (7) another ex-girlfriend who is an elementary-school teacher and a left-wing activist.

Make no mistake: McElwee is a highly eccentric gent, and the ladies who allow him to enter their lives, camera poised constantly upon his shoulder while they calmly discuss the most intimate details of their lives, form a colorful gallery of grotesques who bear more resemblance to the bizarrest characters in Thomas Wolfe, Flannery O'Conner, Eudora Welty, and the early Capote than to the ordinary run of Southerners. One wonders frequently, during the film, whether he has sincerely chosen these women on the basis of their romantic appeal to him (they run the gamut from homely to mildly attractive), or whether he has deliberately sought out the most offbeat available specimens of Dixie womanhood.

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer and author of* The Middle Generation, *a study of four twentieth-century American poets (Archon Books).*

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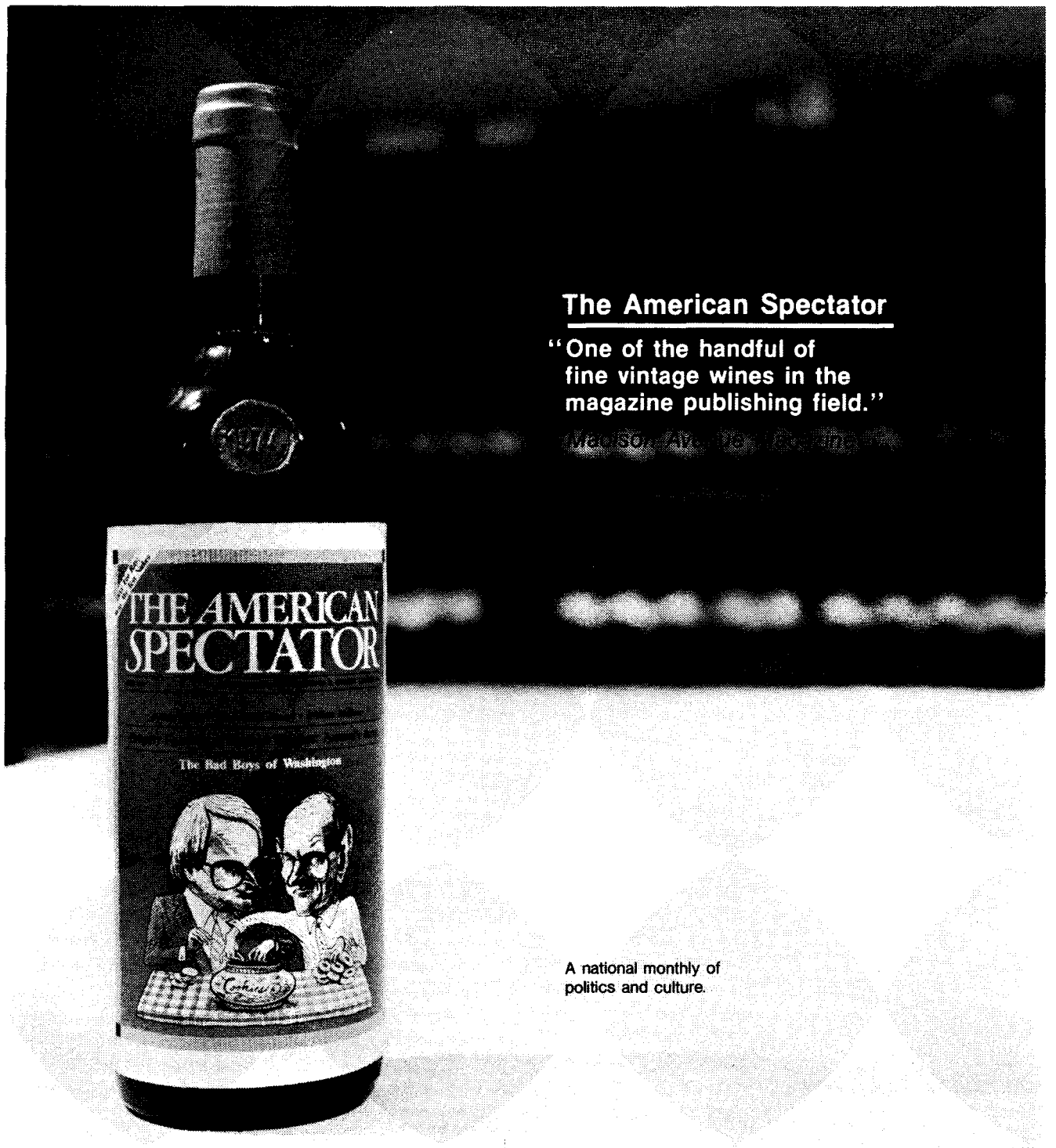
But *Sherman's March* is not only about McElwee's romantic misadventures. It is also, in a sometimes subtle way, about—yes—Sherman's march. McElwee is fascinated by the paradox of Sherman's character: as he reminds us more than once, the general—whom Southerners to this day despise for his merciless destruction of farms and cities—was in private life a good and humble citizen who "loved the South." In this regard, McElwee seems to regard Sherman as something of a touchstone for our own time, in which a country made up of essentially good and humble people has at its command an arsenal of weapons capable of destroying the world. Throughout the film, the enigmatic, emblematic figure of Sherman hovers in the background. We are constantly aware of the role that his depredations played in shaping the insular, tragic postbellum South that is symbolized (however grotesquely) by the Georgians and Carolinians whom we meet in the film; and we are aware, too, that it was Sherman's use of modern weapons and his policy of total warfare against a civilian population that, in a way, marked the beginning of our present era—an era in which nobody, man or woman, civilian or soldier, can feel himself to be out of harm's way.

To be sure, the folks in McElwee's film seem unusually preoccupied with matters nuclear. At least two of his women, for example, are doomsday fanatics who keep provisions stored in their home in preparation for a nuclear conflict; another (the elementary-school teacher) spends her spare time organizing no-nuke protests. (Sometimes one wonders whether McElwee finds obsession with nuclear war aphrodisiacal.) A running "joke" throughout the film concerns McElwee's own recurrent nightmares about a nuclear holocaust and his childhood memory of an H-bomb test off the coast of Hawaii.

Indeed, Sherman and the Bomb aside, the subject to which the film keeps returning is McElwee himself—his thoughts, dreams, memories, desires, and chronic insomnia. At first one sympathizes with the graceless and unattractive filmmaker, who presents himself as a sincere young man in search of a good woman to love; if anything, he seems too nice, too laid-back, too willing to let himself be dumped on. His sister (in between grisly descriptions of her recent plastic surgery) complains to McElwee that he is too dull and unkempt to attract a really nice girl; his ex-teacher (an outspoken Shelley Winters type who is the highlight of the film) gripes that he's a stick-in-the-mud who needs to learn how to sweep a woman off her feet, needs to stop using his camera to distance himself from real life. And McElwee sits there politely taking all this criticism—a sweet, sane man, apparently, in a nest of crazies, a sensible guy surrounded by ridiculous folks who don't seem to have the slightest inkling of how ridiculous they are.

But by the end of the film one realizes that both women have a point. There is something smug and self-satisfied, even arrogant, about the persona McElwee projects in this film; though he trains his camera relentlessly upon those around him, mercilessly exposing their foibles and foolishness, he seems perfectly content with himself just as he is. At times, to be sure, he does set his camera on automatic, sit himself in front of it, and speak from his heart—but he's hardly the guinea pig that his friends and lovers are. It is always McElwee who is in control, always McElwee and his romantic quest that form the chief topics of conversation. *Sherman's March* is, in short, a shameless exercise in solipsism. As such, however, it is an undeniable *tour de force*—quirky, funny, and almost continuously engaging throughout its epic two and a half hours. □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THROUGH A GLASS RIGHTLY

by Kent Owen

Inevitably, there will come a time when the children will have to be told. Was there ever such a thing as conservatism in America, and, if so, what substance did it possess to give it staying power? Meanwhile, until the right answers come along, we shall have to make do with a congeries of episodes that may yet congeal into firm and lasting shape.

Television is the medium for the job. As McLuhan decreed, the printed word is the relict of outmoded consciousness, that of persons given to sorting through experience. TV's ineluctable swell over the last forty years has mounted while conservatism has ebbed and flowed across the land. To a marked extent TV has propelled conservatism with a sounding force that has changed it from a private domain of sense and sensibility to a public ideology. It is not a "post hoc" fallacy that what Americans recognize as conservatism is largely the product of video technology, a composite of images reified on the gross national picture tube.

"The Conservatives," a 90-minute documentary produced by the Blackwell Corporation of Washington and shown on the Public Broadcasting Service stations, is supposed to shed light on how its subject behaved during the last four decades. The title suggests an authoritative, even definitive account. A more modest approach, maybe done up in TV-sports lingo, could have called it "Some Kind of Conservatives." What the show reveals is that a number of clever, energetic, and determined persons took over a static body of serious thought and genteel sentiment, and turned it into a brassy, truculent, and rancorous movement.

What those eager to know the wayward history of American conservatism will make of it is puzzling. From its opening portrait gallery (among them M. Stanton Evans, James J. Kilpatrick, and Holmes Alexander, if I didn't blink) the program presents a loose-jointed chronology that tells how our patriots reacted to divers stimuli: the Hiss vs. Chambers combat, Sen. Joe McCarthy's career, William Buckley and the *National Review*, the vicissitudes of Richard Nixon, the Goldwater campaign of '64, and, molto crescendo, Ronald Reagan and the Rightist Risorgimento. If you want to learn what patrimony Adams, Hamilton, Madison, Webster, and Lincoln left to the latterday conservatives, disappointment awaits you, although Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* gets a passing mention (as does Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*). For that matter, you will look in vain for Robert A. Taft, the beau ideal of many mid-century American conservatives, or for Arthur Vandenberg, or for any Democrat, not Richard Russell, Harry Byrd, Alben Barkley, or Tom Connally.

In short, the program does not concern itself with the lessons of history or the roll of honor as conservatism at its purest professes to do. Rather, "The Conservatives" focuses on the grievances and discontents that mobilized political operatives, publicists, and activists into taking over the Republican party under the true-blue colors of "conservatism." The turning point, according to this account, came at the 1961 Avenue Motel gathering in Chicago when Clifton White and his fellow Young Republicans set about to capture the GOP for the greater glory of conservatism. The clear and present menace, more than Kennedy and Johnson, was Nelson Rockefeller and the fell grip of the Eastern Establishment; the twenty-two confederates were determined to overthrow a leadership that had become stolid, lazy, and, horrors, susceptible to liberalism.

More than the Democrats (who suddenly found their ranks full of Kennedys, New Frontierpersons, and Great Socialites as well as unionists and New Dealers), the Republicans entrusted party management to slogging mediocrities who kept the heat turned low and the ledgers in order. While talented Democrats sought and found careers in politics, Republicans chose to make their marks in business, industry, and the professions, leaving the operation of campaigns, organizations, and supporting institutions to whoever would do the work. That was the defect of Old Guard Republicanism, which earned one failure after another at the polls and stranded the party in glowering defeatism. Such a lordly disdain for the vocation of politics struck midwestern Republicans as stupid. Gentlemanly amateurism may be a nice ethic for club sports (as it used to be for intercollegiate athletics), but it is a hell of a way to run a railroad—as the N.Y. Central, the Pennsy, and the old-line GOP never quite grasped.

Hence, the emergence of Clifton White & Company is as important to an understanding of the contemporary GOP as was the insurgency of Russell Davenport, Oren Root, and Charles Halleck in the Willkie campaign of 1940. It's an open question whether the power grab was driven by ideology, or just the other way around. Louis Sullivan's dictum that form follows function can be applied to the transformation of the GOP, if one takes ideological conservatism as an overarching structure capacious enough for disparate energies and ambitions. If the Whites brought savvy, tenacity, and skill to the practice of Republican politics, Karl Hess, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and a strange alliance of former social democrats, ex-lefties, and heterodox right-wingers supplied the theories that gave the movement an apparent coherence.

Older, more orthodox conservatives (the Burkean traditionalists, if you will) were elated at the victories won by this new vitality and shrewdness, but dismayed by the ideologizing of what they had upheld as a matter of personal character; that is to say, conservatism as a way of conducting the affairs of the polity in light of how history is understood, more a matter of steadily accreted wisdom, disposition, temperament, elective affinities, and, above all, moral responsibility than of rigidly programmatic initiatives carried out on the basis of abstractions. Indeed, such

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conservatives tend to regard ideology as the bane of political parties and of the political process in general, believing that systematized rationalism inevitably hardens into authoritarian dogma and thus corrupts its adherents into bigots and zealots. Hence, some conservatives remain of two minds about the advent of Reaganism, the New Right (particularly its raucous and intolerant populist elements), and neoconservatism, thinking themselves less a movement than a settlement that admires the examples of Robert A. Taft and Henry Jackson as interpreted by James Kilpatrick, George Will, Peter Viereck, Russell Kirk, among the more prominent.

What conservatism in America, root and branch, holds as essential are representative democracy, individual liberty, private enterprise, and unyielding resistance to Soviet imperialism, international Communism, and totalitarianism. Conservatives close ranks against the arbitrary interventions of government into the private realm (except, of course, when social or religious conservatives demand them), deficit spending (except, of course, when military preparedness requires it), or the entanglements of foreign adventures (except, of course, when one presidential doctrine or another needs to be reinforced). Where the serried ranks break apart is on the jagged point of humane responsibility for the public interest, the American community. What obligations must all citizens accept to conserve the common good? What private duties of civility, self-restraint, and moderation must we observe in our conduct? What of the American experience must we promote and strengthen at whatever cost? Finally, what do we want to keep safe and secure about America? Do those who call themselves conservatives want too much, too little, or the wrong things altogether?

"The Conservatives" might have treated questions like these in a thoughtfully discursive manner. Although TV producers and critics sniff at "talking heads," it is in such wise that conservatism best presents its affirmations and contradictions, as Messrs. Buckley, Podhoretz, Rusher, White, and Ralph de Toledano, among others, manage to prove. It's a shame that Peter Viereck, poet, historian, and conservative thinker *par excellence*, was not included, for his measured reflections are as sound as they are eloquent. Nor is Kristol, Kilpatrick, Will, or the proprietor Tyrrell here. And there's no one to provide a bracing dose of antithesis, perhaps John Kenneth Galbraith, Arthur Schlesinger, Murray Kempton, Richard L. Strout, Henry Steele Commager, or that bugbear for all reasons, Gore Vidal.

What "The Conservatives" fails to do—if one may blame Neal B. Freeman for not doing what he didn't attempt—is to present a taxonomy of American conservatism. The medium is useful for instructing and informing, as Ronald Reagan has convincingly demonstrated, and the lexicon of political discourse usually needs to be set straight or brought up to date. Before too many reflective conservatives become ill at ease in the company of Jesse Helms, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Richard Viguerie, and John Lofton (again, a batch of mixed and matched specimens), a scrupulous observer needs to make pointed distinctions about who is up to what, on what grounds, and for whose good. To confuse Richard Lugar, for instance, a classical conservative whose political practice is rightly moderate with Jesse Helms, a radical reactionary whose practice is extremist, is to make American conservatism as loose and easy as a trollop who doesn't much care whom she picks up.

Maybe something like Philip Rahv's distinction between American literature's "palefaces" and "redskins" can do the trick: the tradition-conscious, historical-minded, civility-respecting gradualists who work to preserve the balance of rights and institutions centered in the Constitution and to bring about the well-being of society through reasonable measures versus the single-issue-obsessed, ruthlessly expedient, intransigently demanding ideologues who insist on the uncompromising attainment of whatever economic, social, moral, and political imperatives define their vision of the compulsory Good Society. A dichotomy, to be sure, and like most patently false but, nonetheless, stuffed full of distinctions worth arguing about. Even if one dislikes this approach, there is plentiful irony in the fact that conservatism, of all words, has proved incapable of keeping a stable, orderly definition of itself.

Perhaps what is really happening to conservatism is that it is evolving (*pace*, fundamentalists of little faith) into an utterly different form of political philosophy, something at once primitively vigorous and sophisticatedly organized. Perhaps the dynamic usurpers from the South and West, now in command of the Republican party, have assembled a creature so all-consuming and tremendous that old-school conservatism, whether Republican or Democrat, will soon be as moribund as the Federalists and the Whigs, fit only for the maunderings of antiquarians. Perhaps "The Conservatives" is prophesying that the coming millennium has brought forth a sore-as-hell, cunning-as-a-serpent movement of populists, reactionaries, hirelings, operatives, consultants, publicists, jack-leg economists, academic careerists, foundationists, evangelicals, supernumerary pols, and variety artists, who, taken as fast as they come, constitute the Grand Standing Army of the Great Conservative Alliance. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. Better, at least, ignoble successes than noble failures.

With banners waving and trumpets a-blare, there is a certain triumphalism to "The Conservatives" that ignores the whirr of time's winged chariot. The program comes to a stirring if elegiac end as the nation's oldest President, in the midst of his final term, eulogizes the deceased Whittaker Chambers, the sempiternal Clare Boothe Luce, and the honorably retired Barry Goldwater. These are moments of homage—the awarding of the Medals of Freedom—that befit conservatism of any description. Still the glory of the occasion is hardly a summoning of new leaders and stewards from the rising generations to the service of American Conservatism. It is a remembrance of things past, a celebration of famous victories, a last hurrah.

Whether the body of thought and action extolled in "The Conservatives" will "live long and prosper," as another missionary endeavor *ad astra* puts it, is the question that later television documentaries will have to address. Plato cautions his readers not to mistake the flickering shadows on cave walls for the real thing. It is conservative advice worth heeding. Images can play one false, particularly if one is unsure of the source of the light by which they are seen. As history affords one kind of illumination, so does the light of common day. One way or another, anyone who thinks himself a conservative had better keep that in mind. After all, a perennial philosophy is seldom seen to best advantage off the walls. □

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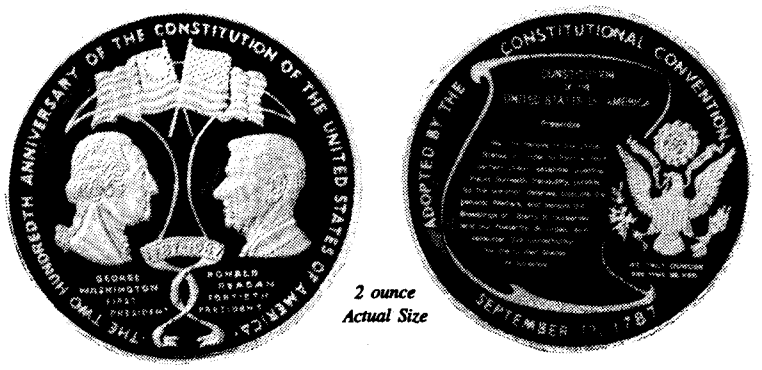
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BOOK REVIEWS

THE HARVEST OF SORROW: SOVIET COLLECTIVIZATION AND THE TERROR FAMINE

Robert Conquest/Oxford University Press/$19.95

Robert D. Kaplan

At the height of the famine emergency in 1985, a few journalists sat around a restaurant table in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, considering analogies for the food crisis in the Horn of Africa. Of course Biafra and Cambodia came to mind. But Robin Knight of *U.S. News & World Report* had the last word when he compared Ethiopia in the 1980s with the Soviet Union in the 1930s—at the start of the campaign against the kulaks. Knight had no idea how prescient he was: as if on cue, in early 1986 came the first reports of a brutal campaign of relocation and collectivization against relatively prosperous Oromo peasants in the Hararghe region east of Addis Ababa.

I was reminded of the incident while reading Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine.* Having logged many miles of travel in famine-stricken Ethiopia, I found that Conquest's account of the deportation of the kulaks and the resultant famine in the Ukraine between 1929 and 1933 gave me a chilling sense of *déjà vu.* In everything except sheer numbers—more than ten times as many people died in the Ukraine—the two tragedies are strikingly similar.

In the Soviet Union, a regime largely composed of ethnic Russians inflicted untried and theoretical principles of collectivized agriculture upon a Ukrainian peasantry burdened by centuries of feudalism. In Ethiopia, half a century later, a regime largely composed of ethnic Amharas used the same Stalinist agricultural principles to collectivize an Eritrean, Tigrean, and Oromo peasantry also burdened by centuries of feudalism. In both cases, the result was famine.

The Kremlin kept figures for livestock mortality but not for human mortality. The Ethiopian ruler, Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, once spoke to a group of Western visitors about the famine's cost in human and animal lives, as if one was not necessarily more important than the other.

In both cases, the famine was used as a weapon against peoples whose nationalistic yearnings were never fully grasped by the Western public. In their history and culture, both the Ukraine and Eritrea are separate nations under the domination of Soviet Russia and Ethiopia—two nineteenth-century empires that have managed to retain their possessions throughout most of the twentieth century. Because the Ukraine has never really been thought of as separate and distinct from Russia, the millions of deaths became—in Western eyes—an internal Soviet affair. Meanwhile, the West's failure to see Eritrea—and to a lesser extent, Tigre—as distinct entities within the Ethiopian empire caused the famine to be viewed purely as a sequel to drought, rather than as a combined sequel to drought and ethnic war. Thus, instead of a perpetrator of terror, the Marxist government in Addis Ababa became a mere victim of nature.

In both Ethiopia and the Soviet Union, collectivization was carried out against starving peasants by a well-fed militia, for which special food was transported into the countryside. Churches were destroyed in the Ukraine. According to the testimony of Oromo refugees, mosques were burned in Ethiopia.

In 1921, crop requisitions by the new Communist government during a drought led to a famine in the Volga basin, claiming five million lives. America contributed $45 million to ease the suffering. The aid helped buttress a shaky regime which survived to inflict an even greater loss of life a decade later. In the mid-eighties, America gave hundreds of millions of dollars to help famine victims in Ethiopia. This benefited another hard-pressed Marxist regime, which, according to recent surveys commissioned by the Agency for International Development, is creating the necessary conditions for another famine, by failing to reform its agricultural policies. Both Stalin and Mengistu have—to use Conquest's own words—"thought of genuine economic trends as obstacles to be overcome by the power of State decrees."

I dwell on the similarities between these two tragedies not just because of what they imply about the present situation in Ethiopia—a far-off African country—but because of what they imply about the failure of modern memory, then and now.

On the scales of human suffering, Stalin's assault on the Ukrainian peasantry is—World War II aside—the most significant and dreadful event of the twentieth century. More people died as a result of dekulakization and collectivization than in all of the First World War. More than twice as many Ukrainians and other nearby peoples died at the hands of Stalin than Jews at the hands of Hitler. However, though dutifully reported in the world press at the time, the tragedy has never really registered in the consciousness of the West. Conquest, a Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, is forced to employ the vocabulary of the better-known Nazi holocaust in order to describe the magnitude of this one—depicting the Ukraine of fifty years ago as "one vast Belsen."

Incredible as it may be, the selective memory of the liberal West has so obscured this seminal event of twentieth-century history that the author is under the burden of proving that it actually happened. Pages upon pages are therefore expended upon the extrapolation of death rates from census reports and other documents. Grain figures and other leaden paraphernalia are delved into. First-hand accounts, many of which are redundant, abound. But what the book lacks in readability it more than makes up in its worth as a historical document.

By Conquest's "conservative" estimate, Stalin's terror claimed 14.5 million lives in the Ukraine: seven million as a result of famine, four million due to dekulakization, and 3.5 million due to deaths in prison. Though millions died, the author reminds us that "each unit among these millions was a person, and suffered an individual fate." Thus the mass of statistics is brought down to earth with personal accounts:

A woman seven months pregnant in Kharsyn village, Poltava Province, was caught

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Robert D. Kaplan, an Athens-based correspondent for ABC News and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, *is studying the African famine on a grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation and the Institute for Educational Affairs.*

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plucking spring wheat, and beaten with a board, dying soon afterwards. In Bil'ske [in the same province], Nastia Slipenko, a mother with three young children whose husband had been arrested, was shot by an armed guard while digging up kolkhoz potatoes by night. The three children then starved to death. In another village in that province the son of a dispossessed peasant gleaning ears of corn in the kolkhoz field was beaten to death by the watchman "activist."

It takes a strong stomach to read this book. The atrocities, which included cannibalism, are painstakingly listed, creating an aura of obscene monotony reminiscent of William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Unfortunately, Conquest lacks Shirer's gift of narrative, which means this book is not going to be nearly as widely read. Yet some paragraphs are unforgettable:

Yet another tells of a village . . . that "cattle died for lack of fodder, people ate bread made from nettles, biscuits made from one weed, porridge made from another." Horse manure was eaten, partly because it contained whole grains of wheat. Over the early winter they ate all the remaining chickens and other animals. Then they turned to dogs, and later cats. "It was hard to catch them too. The animals had become afraid of people and their eyes were wild. People boiled them. All there was were tough veins and muscles. And from their heads they made a meat jelly."

At least the Nazis knew who the Jews were. Not so, the case with the kulaks. Though Stalin said the kulak must be destroyed, Conquest points out that by 1930, the kulak—someone belonging to a relatively wealthy peasant caste—had already ceased to exist. What Stalin thought of as kulaks were really peasants only marginally less poor than their neighbors. Many of the so-called kulaks ("mortgagers" or "moneylenders") had less money or property than the Party officials who persecuted them. The definition became so soft that villagers often used it as a pretext to settle scores against each other. The Party's rationale for this state of affairs was summarized in a 1934 novel: "Not one of them was guilty of anything; but they belonged to a class that was guilty of everything."

Because the class as a whole was guilty, children suffered the same fate as adults. Several million of the famine victims were children. Conquest writes that "Arthur Koestler saw from his train starving children who 'looked like embryos out of alcohol bottles.' " The Party activists referred to these little ones as "kulak bastards." This cold-hearted attitude was an outgrowth not of Stalinism but of Leninism. During the 1891-92 famine on the Volga, Lenin refused to do relief work "on the grounds that famine would radicalize the masses, and commented: 'Psychologically, this talk of feeding the starving is nothing but an expression of the saccharine-sweet sentimentality so characteristic of our intelligentsia.' "

Of the great holocausts of this century, none is more relevant in modern-political terms than the slaughter in the Ukraine. The Nazis who persecuted the Jews and the Young Turks who persecuted the Armenians are no longer in power. But as the author of this book notes, "what occurred [in the Ukraine] was all part of the normal political experience of the senior members of today's ruling group in the Kremlin. And the system then established in the countryside is part of the Soviet order as it exists today. Nor have the methods employed to create it been repudiated, except as to inessentials."

I fear, however, that Conquest's estimable work may be in vain. The modern mind, especially the minds of those who shape our modern memory, may be beyond redemption. When I related to a colleague the stories told by Oromo refugees about collectivization in Ethiopia, he asked me, by way of justification: "Yes, but these Oromos, aren't they like kulaks?" □

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CITY OF NETS: A PORTRAIT OF HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1940s

Otto Friedrich/Harper & Row/$25.00

Mark Falcoff

Hollywood. Few words in the English language—or any other, for that matter—evoke an equal multiplicity of images, all shared in some measure by people in every corner of the world. You see them as tourists on Saturday afternoons in the summer (some in saris, some in leisure suits) patrolling the main boulevard of what is now a rather seedy district of Los Angeles, having finally breached the wall of the magic city, their faces fallen in disappointment. The locals—there are few true natives—know: these people are searching for something which no longer exists. Or perhaps never did. "This place is just like Asbury Park, New Jersey," the dyspeptic Nathanael West wrote when the legend was at its height. "The same stucco houses, women in pajamas, delicatessen stores, etc. There is nothing to do except tennis, golf, or the movies." Well, not exactly. As the author of *City of Nets* puts it more acutely, "Hollywood really is an imaginary city that exists in the mind of anyone who has, in his mind, lived there."

There was, of course, a real Hollywood once—a few orange groves and wheat farms which became a suburb of Los Angeles, "an array of low-lying buildings and streets and people . . . a community that was partly an industry, partly a technology, partly a style and a quality of mind, partly a negation of all those things, partly just a hunger for money and success." *This* Hollywood owed its existence to good weather (which made it possible to film outdoors most of the year, at a time when slow-emulsion films imposed massive lighting requirements) and distance from New York and Europe, where the owners of motion picture patents were too far away to enforce their rights. The founders of the motion picture industry were actually a bunch of thugs and gangsters on the make, many born in Eastern Europe and schooled in the hard experience of immigrant childhoods. Grant Mr. Friedrich his brief: *as individuals* they had no taste, no culture, and no class. All were crude, some were actually evil. Yet, even as the author of *City of Nets* concedes, they made a permanent contribution to American life and to the common culture of the twentieth century. Their best works—*The Maltese Falcon, King's Row, Casablanca, Yankee Doodle Dandy, Shanghai Express, Citizen Kane, The Wizard of Oz, The Best Years of Our Lives*, without even beginning to exhaust the list—are still a credit to the process which gave them life, and the town with which they were inevitably associated. This is one of the many paradoxes which enrich Otto Friedrich's book, and make it one of the few serious works ever written on the subject.

Before actually discussing its content, it might be useful to make two methodological points. Apparently since the 1950s the American book-reading public has shown an inexhaustible curiosity about movies and the people who make (or rather, made) them. A glance at Friedrich's bibliography, which runs a full twelve, double-column pages of six-point type, gives some sense of the vast store of memoirs, gossip, and scandal literature through which the author had to wade in order to find his material. Most of it is trash which no intelligent person would wish to waste time reading, but in the hands of a truly cultivated, witty, and charming narrator such as Otto Friedrich, it can be converted into material worthy of attention.

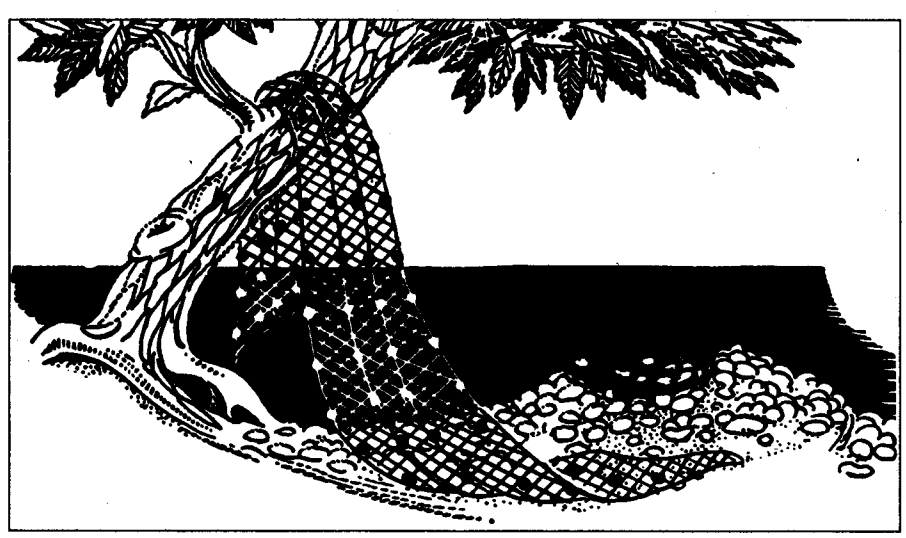
Secondly, Friedrich is a "progressive" historian, in the sense of Charles and Mary Beard or Gustavus Meyers. He is out to expose malefactors of great wealth, and to discredit what he regards as the myth of capitalism and the free market—and truth to tell, in the case of the movie industry, he has happened upon a treasure trove of evidence. But that much said, there is a huge difference between his outlook and that of what passes for historians at most American universities today, New Left or post-New Left "revisionists" who are out to vindicate the American Communist Party and its supporters and apologists. Friedrich is balanced, careful, fair, and often admits that interpretations uncongenial to him personally may be true anyway. This is particularly evident in his treatment of the activities of the Hollywood Ten and the House Un-American Activities Committee—a chapter entitled "Un-Americanism (1947)," which is worth the price of the book.

The book itself is divided by year and by theme. Thus chapter one is entitled "Welcome (1939)," chapter four "Americanism (1942)," chapter eleven "Expulsions (1949)," and so forth. This is useful to the author as a means of organizing a vast amount of material, although inevitably he finds himself shifting back and forth in time even within his prescribed limits, and many of the same themes appear and reappear throughout the book.

One such is the sheer incompetence, stupidity, and philistinism of the production moguls. Far from being bold innovators, they "had stumbled into the use of sound almost by accident and they were reluctantly beginning to experiment with color." No less a legendary figure than Irving Thalberg, producer of the immortal *Jazz Singer*, is on record as having said that "talking pictures are a passing fad," and when offered an option on *Gone With the Wind*, dismissed the proposal with the remark, "No civil war picture ever made a nickel." And then there is the unforgettable memo from the MGM Music Department to its stable of composers: "From this day forward, no MGM score will contain a minor chord." By discussing carefully the production decisions surrounding some of the more successful films—particularly *Double Indemnity* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*—Friedrich shows how fine was the line between a turkey and a towering artistic achievement.

Friedrich also emphasizes the remarkable cosmopolitanism of the industry, at least in the 1940s. That was, of course, the era in which Hollywood fell heir to some of the best talents of Central Europe—not merely film makers like Fritz Lang or dramatists like Max Reinhardt, but writers like Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Maurice Maeterlinck, Franz Werfel, and the ubiquitous Bertold Brecht, and composers and conductors like Igor Stravinsky, Hanns Eisler, and Bruno Walter. Nor were refugees the only ones to gather under the roof of the Brown Derby: such American writers as Theodore Dreiser, James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, Robert Sherwood, Dorothy Parker, even William Faulkner, earned fabulous salaries as members of script-writing stables (the term "collective," though politically compatible, was not yet in vogue). Some misguided souls might imagine that these people despised Hollywood, its works, and themselves for selling out to it, but as Friedrich points out, this was far from the case. Even committed Marxists like Bertold Brecht and Hanns Eisler were ready for "money and success," and when their material failed to win approval from their superiors, it often reappeared elsewhere in a different, more "serious" form.

Then there was the sheer kinkiness of the people who made up the film community. This is not merely legend, but fact: these folks were very, very strange, made so perhaps by the context, or other people's expectations, or merely the absence of restraints so far from the centers of civilized life in the United States. One tale, dealing with aircraft-cum-cinema mogul Howard Hughes, gives an example of Friedrich's wry narrative style, and also summarizes the subject for the entire book:



Hughes apparently suffered an affliction known as ejaculatory impotence, which rather surprised Bette Davis, who had taken him quite seriously. So much so, in fact, that her husband, Harmon Nelson, who spent his evenings as a bandleader in the Blossom Room of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, became suspicious. Nelson hired a detective to wire the bedroom, and then, as required by the primitive technology of the day, established himself in a sound truck parked in a nearby canyon. After listening for a while to his wife and Hughes struggling to achieve some sort of climax, Nelson went running down the hill to his home, burst into the bedroom, and threatened to make his recordings public. Hughes swung wildly at the cuckold but missed. Miss Davis went into hysterics. Nelson decided to salvage his honor by blackmailing

Mark Falcoff is a writer living in Washington D.C..

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Hughes for seventy thousand dollars, and Hughes, terrified by the threatened disclosure of his sexual problems, paid the money. Bette Davis, the only one in the triangle who showed any sense of honor at all, insisted on repaying Hughes every cent.

In *City of Nets* Friedrich is also out to expose Hollywood's racial and religious prejudices, above all its anti-Semitism, notwithstanding the fact that so many leaders of the industry came from Jewish backgrounds (or perhaps even because of it). There are some choice quotes from Louis B. Mayer which recall the sage remark of George Orwell that "if you want to understand the origins of anti-Semitism, the best book to read is still the Old Testament." Anti-Mexican feeling was likewise strong, particularly in the context of Los Angeles's special geographical position, but carried over into such patently ridiculous decisions as the de-Latinization of Rita Hayworth (born Rita Cansino). She was compelled not only to change her name and her hair color, but to undergo painful electrolysis treatments in order to alter her hairline and make her appear more "Anglo-Saxon." The final paradox was that all this worked: she won the role of the *femme fatale* in Fox's *Blood and Sand*, "not as a Latin," Friedrich observes, "who would never have been considered worthy of such an important part, but as a Latin pretending to be an Anglo pretending to be a Latin." Of course, these prejudices were silly or pernicious, but they were widely shared by even quite well-educated Americans; to expect the benighted illiterates who ruled the industry to transcend somehow the common culture of the day is really unfair. Even Friedrich himself says more than once, "it is difficult to maintain a sense of perspective." Indeed.

Of course, politics is the very heart of this book. But in explicating the topic, Friedrich departs from progressive writ again and again, offering some very surprising twists. After World War II there was a deflation of leftish enthusiasms in the United States, although to what degree this was due to the conscious decision of the government, and to what degree to other matters, the author—in spite of his false certainties—does not know and probably cannot. But it is beyond dispute that in the late 1940s the mood of suspicion and accusation in Hollywood became extremely ugly. The facts are clear enough. There were very few real Communists in the industry; few films even remotely leftist were made; the charge of Communism was used to fight the unionization of the industry, or between unions for control of specific branches of the work force. Ironically, the two most pro-Soviet films, *Mission to Moscow* and *Song of Russia*, were made by two of the most reactionary, union-baiting moguls of them all—Jack Warner and Louis B. Mayer. Some of the most piquant pages of *City of Nets* describe in exquisite detail the appearance of both men before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. There, they made perfect fools of themselves. "What [the committee's members] could not seem to understand," Friedrich somewhat wearily remarks,

was that *Song of Russia* was rubbish not because of any political purpose, subversive or otherwise, but because M-G-M was in the business of producing rubbish. That was its function, its nature, its mission. It hardly knew that political purposes existed. M-G-M was the home of Andy Hardy, of Judy Garland, and Esther Williams, and no Communist ideology could ever penetrate or take root in such a playland. When Louis B. Mayer of Minsk decided to make a movie about Russia, he would inevitably make it the Russia of Andy Hardy, accompanied by Tchaikovsky.

Friedrich not only takes the inquisitors to task, however, but also their intended victims. He finds the "Hollywood Ten"—a group of screenwriters who were subsequently blacklisted by the industry for refusing to discuss their political views or affiliations before congressional committees—at best arrogant and self-indulgent, at worst sinister and dishonest. They were so "blinded by ideology, or perhaps simply by egotism," he writes, "that [they] seemed to think that they were devastating [Congressman J. Parnell] Thomas and the committee with their wit, their defiance, their devotion to humanitarian principles. The reality was quite different." Several ended up serving prison terms which granted them a martyrdom they did not deserve. As for Bertold Brecht and Hanns Eisler—both of whom subsequently proved their devotion to the Soviet Union—they got off by lying. Liberal though he may be, Mr. Friedrich seems to believe that Communists, unlike witches, actually do exist.

The "blacklist" and the atmosphere that surrounded it is not one of the prouder events of American cultural history, but as *City of Nets* shows, it hardly crippled the film industry. In fact, virtually no top stars were permanently barred from the screen, and as for the writers—well, good as John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo could be, replacements for them were found. The decline of the industry, which followed shortly afterwards, was due not to cultural impoverishment, as some would have it, but to the breakup of the industry cartel (which formerly permitted studios to own the theaters which exhibited their wares) under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and even more, to the spread of a new and competitive medium, television. Thus, in 1945, there were only 6,500 television sets in the United States; by 1950, the figure reached 11 million. The objective conditions, as it were, which had granted Hollywood a quasi-monopoly on the entertainment industry in America, and even in the world at large, no longer existed. Hollywood would linger on for a few more years, but by the end of the following decade, it was a name which could only be placed between quotation marks—not merely a memory, but a legend.

Reading this vastly satisfying book in 1987, one cannot help wondering how Otto Friedrich feels about American films today. It would be difficult to argue that the industry prevents us—as apparently it once did—from seeing films which excoriate racism (*A Soldier's Story*), anti-union sentiment (*Nine to Five*), militarism (*Platoon, Born on the Fourth of July, Coming Home*), big business (*The China Syndrome*), American foreign policy (*Missing, Reds, Daniel*) . . . the list could go on and on. The prevailing fashions in Hollywood itself are decidedly left-of-center. Martin Sheen sleeps on grates in Washington, D.C. to call attention to the plight of the homeless; Ed Asner raises money for Communist guerrillas in El Salvador; Jane Fonda rationalizes Stalinism in Vietnam; Jack Lemmon allows as how the fantasies of *Missing* are historically accurate, and so forth. Today the archetypical Hollywood mogul is actually a television producer, Norman Lear, who is also the principal financial supporter of a liberal-left political lobby, People for the American Way. We are light years from *City of Nets*. This new Hollywood, however, is incapable of producing one *Maltese Falcon*. It would be interesting to know just why. □

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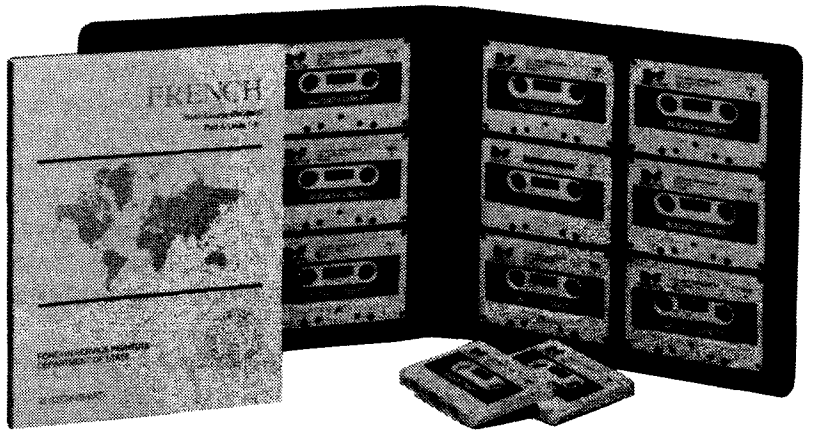

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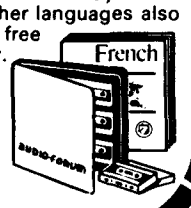

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REAGAN'S AMERICA: INNOCENTS AT HOME

Garry Wills/Doubleday/$19.95

Fred Barnes

Garry Wills is a lot like the Ronald Reagan he portrays in this interesting hatchet job. He says Reagan is a con man who believes his own con. "It is clear, from early on, what Reagan's desire would be: he pretended there was no pretense," Wills writes. "When he had to, he could will his own innocence." Wills plainly thinks he's put together an intellectually hefty case on Reagan, but there's sadly little heft here at all. He's dressed up some cynical theories about Reagan in fancy intellectual clothes. Most everything he writes is breathtakingly superficial, non-serious, beside the point, or irrelevant, but always interesting. My guess is that Wills isn't even faintly aware of the thinness of his case. Writers of screeds usually aren't. He believes his own scam.

Otherwise, why would he make such a big deal out of the fact that Reagan once described his youth in Illinois as "one of those rare Huck Finn-Tom Sawyer idylls?" That description seems innocent enough to me. What Reagan had in mind, I suppose, was just what you'd think. He grew up in fairly happy circumstances in the rural Middle West. But Wills points out that the two Mark Twain novels are "chronicles of superstition, racism, and crime," not stories of pleasant childhood. And Reagan didn't have it so great growing up, since his father was a boozer who dragged the family all over central Illinois. Wills has got Reagan cold on this one. His childhood wasn't as idyllic as advertised. But so what? You've got to believe your own con to think it matters that Reagan tossed off a cliché to summarize a reasonably happy, though not totally idyllic, upbringing.

Or why would Wills put such emphasis on the contrast between Reagan's persistent criticism of government's role in society and the fact that government helped Reagan's hometown prosper and gave his father and brother jobs during the Depression? This is not a telling point. It's a small irony that I'm glad to know about. But chapter after chapter on the subject is excessive. And when Wills drones on about Reagan's starring in four films as a Treasury agent, it gets obsessive. "Reagan worked on the screen for one government bureau, just as his father and brother had worked for other bureaus in Illinois," he writes. "In the 1930s, whatever their earlier or later differences, all the Reagan men were G-men." That's G for government.

I'm not exactly sure what Wills is getting at, but clearly he thinks it's something awfully significant. Should Reagan's talk about the Welfare Queen and abuse of food stamps be dismissed as hypocritical or phony because of his family's connections with the federal government? Or is Reagan such a dope that he has no ironic sense? Or has he blotted the family link to government out of his mind? In each case, the point is silly. Teddy Kennedy's father was a tycoon. Does that disqualify Ted from attacking business? I don't think so. Maybe Wills does. Regardless, he writes as if he's dented Reagan badly. But the same evidence he lays out could be used to argue that Reagan has the intellectual candlepower and integrity to rise above his family background. At another point, Wills says of Reagan: "This enemy of the planned society cannot move in his daily life without fixed schedules." Imagine that. There must be socialists somewhere with cluttered desks, too. What of it? The guy who thinks this is important believes his own scam.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

Wills, a columnist and professor at Northwestern University, emulates the Reagan character in his book in at least three other ways. Reagan, he says, has come to believe in legendary versions of both his own past achievements and the nation's history, upbeat versions that the public buys while knowing better. For himself, Wills does a slight twist on this. He delivers no less distorted versions of the past and expects the reader to accept them. Some will, some will know better. Wills depicts the economic recovery, now in its fifth year with no end in sight, as almost non-existent. "The promise had been pain-free deliverance from stagflation," he writes.

> The reality had been a quick easing of inflation by the "old-time religion" remedy of deep recession, followed by a sluggish move away from stagnation. About half of the inflation's drop was the product of recession, another third coming from the adventitious easing of oil and other import prices, and 20 percent from a change in accounting practices (another example of the kind of magic the Reagan administration practiced with numbers).

The American invasion of Grenada in 1983 was no less a disgrace. He kisses it off as an adventure "undertaken to 'save' the American states to our south—yet it violated the treaty of the Organization of American States and the Rio Pact, as well as the UN Charter and the United States Constitution." Anyone who believes that's a fair or sufficient summary of the Grenada invasion must wonder why Reagan hasn't been impeached.

Like Reagan, Wills is inclined to misspeak. Now, I'm not just talking about lying or making a real error. Just slips of the tongue, small stuff not meant to harm. Wills, for example, says that President Ford "could not be renominated." I'll say he couldn't, because he'd never been nominated in the first place. But he was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate in 1976. Wills simply misspoke. Or later he notes that Alexander Haig, on his first day as secretary of state on January 20, 1980, tried to get Reagan to sign a memo that would have made Haig all-powerful in foreign policy. Wills meant January 20, 1981. He misspoke. Wills writes that in the 1970s several editorial writers at the *Wall Street Journal* became enthusiasts for supply-side economics. He lists them as Robert Bartley, Jude Wanniski, and Norman Ture. Of course, he meant Bartley, Wanniski, and Paul Craig Roberts. Ture never worked at the *Wall Street Journal*. Wills merely misspoke.

I could go on with examples of misspeaking, but I won't. There's a final way in which Wills mimics Reagan. Wills poses as a stickler for correct facts and details. He even jabs at Lou Cannon of the *Washington Post*, a rival Reagan biographer, for making a small error. Reagan's birthplace, Tampico, Illinois, had four doctors in 1911, the year Reagan was born, not zero as Cannon told it, Wills says. As for Reagan, he's quite the opposite of Wills in attention to detail and careful use of facts. Or so Wills explains. He includes in his book a long quote from no less a Reagan sympathizer than John Wayne, who favored the Panama Canal treaty that Reagan noisily opposed. Reagan, said Wayne, was "misinforming the people. This is not my point of view against your point of view. These are facts." Well, Wills isn't much good on facts either.

In his zeal to discredit Reagan's economic policies, Wills goes after Jeffrey Bell, an influential supply-sider who was a speechwriter and policy adviser in the 1976 campaign. He correctly attributes to Bell a speech by Reagan calling for a transfer of $90 billion in federal programs to the states. Then, he blithely blames Bell for writing another speech that advocated making Social Security voluntary. This first speech cost Reagan the New Hampshire primary, Wills says, and I won't argue the point, though it's arguable. But Bell didn't write the Social Security speech. Like other supply-siders such as Jack Kemp, he's against tampering with Social Security. "I fought the speech," Bell says. "I didn't want to tinker around with Social Security." The speech was written by Charles Hobbs, now a Reagan White House aide, and John McLaughery, according to Bell. Wills's mistake here isn't misspeaking. He's aiming to hurt, showing that Reagan relied on a single right-wing nut (which Bell, in truth, isn't) for policy speeches.

Again in his haste to skewer, Wills gives a highly incomplete account of a story about a B-17 pilot that Reagan has frequently told. I heard him tell it in Lynchburg, Virginia, during the 1980 campaign, and it had a powerful effect on the audience. The story is vintage Reagan. The bomber is hit during an air raid, and the pilot tells the crew to bail out. Only he finds the young belly gunner badly wounded and stuck in the jagged metal of the plane. To comfort the young man, the pilot stays aboard and they die together as the plane crashes. "After hearing Reagan deliver this story, with quivering voice, in Racine, Wisconsin, in the 1980 campaign, reporters noticed that, if the two men died together, no one could have reported their last words or actions," writes Wills. Despite reporters making fun of it in print, "Reagan has continued to tell the bomb pilot story with great emotion, and obvious belief, in many contexts," Wills adds. He told it to Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton, to

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name two, when he invited them to the White House for a screening of their movie, *Reds*. Wills quotes Beatty as saying that Reagan must have gotten the story from some movie.

Wills never considers the possibility that Reagan might have come by the story honestly. True, it was in a 1944 movie, *Wing and a Prayer*, starring Dana Andrews as the courageous pilot. Lars-Erik Nelson, the Washington bureau chief of the *New York Daily News* and a syndicated columnist, discovered this after researching the story in 1983 and 1984. He also found that the movie wasn't the only source of the story. The April 1944 issue of *Reader's Digest* had a brief item under the headline "That's the Spirit." It told of the wounded airman, terror-stricken and pinned in the plane. The item ended: "The last man to jump heard the remaining crewman, a gunner, say, 'Take it easy, kid. We'll ride this thing down together.' " Nelson tracked down the reporter to whom the story was attributed. That reporter said he heard it from an Air Force p.r. specialist in England, who may have concocted it out of wholecloth. So maybe the story is false. Still, Reagan may have continued telling it in good faith, having read it in *Reader's Digest*. Nelson's research on the subject is well known. In *Cycles of American History*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. gives a full account of the origin of the story and Reagan's retelling of it. Wills doesn't. He settles for the cheap and incomplete version. The best you can say is that this reflects inattention to detail.

Am I being too tough on this book? Perhaps. Again, it is interesting—so many musings and theories. Wills says that Reagan came close to being indicted in 1962 for making a sweetheart deal with Music Corporation of America while he was head of the Screen Actors Guild. Had that happened, his budding political career would have been short-circuited, Wills says ruefully. One of Wills's ironies is insightful. In 1976, Jeane Kirkpatrick attacked the "new class" of "symbol specialists" who were injecting politics with moralistic dreams. "The tendencies Kirkpatrick deplored in her 1976 book were victories in the presidency she came to serve in 1981," he writes. Wills also has a pretty good description of Nancy Reagan's discipline as a political wife. "She practices a severe economy of expression that makes three or four compositions of the features cover all necessary social tasks—the smile of delighted surprise at the top of the airplane stairs, the concerned gaze at redeemable druggies, and—most of all—the upward stare at her husband."

I give Wills credit for three good insights, but no more. I'd be far more charitable toward him if he'd been more that way toward Reagan. But his book is relentlessly negative, as if Reagan has never had an achievement in his life except to fool himself and nearly everyone else. Wills is so eager to kill that he can't resist making contradictory accusations about Reagan. He concedes that Reagan is an adept public performer who honed his skills in radio, movies, TV, and on the General Electric promotional circuit. And he says that in politics the role of consultants in managing candidates and winning elections is vastly overrated. Still, he devotes a chapter to the work of two clinical psychologists in Reagan's campaign for governor of California in 1966. "Reagan was the first candidate to be engineered by professionals at that arcane calling," says Wills. Ordinarily, I'd say Wills can't have it both ways. But if you believe your own scam, I guess you can. □

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Jim Courter/American Studies Center/$16.95; $6.95 paper

Gordon Jackson

Representative Jim Courter, a New Jersey Republican beginning his fifth term, is emerging as the House counterpart of Sam Nunn, the resident expert in the Senate on questions of national security. *Defending Democracy* is a compilation of Courter's speeches and op-ed pieces covering a wide range of defense matters. It deserves a wide readership, including laymen looking for a good primer on defense issues and conservatives who would answer the charge that Reaganites have no coherent foreign policy. Courter has looked hard at the world through the lens of U.S. strategic considerations, and he sees it whole.

He divides the speeches and essays, most of which run about 1,000-2,000 words, into seven broad categories: arms control and strategic modernization; military reform; ending the balance of terror; Central America; regional aspects of Soviet expansionism; terrorism; and public diplomacy and international democracy. Some of the most interesting insights are to be gleaned from the section on military reform, a process that Courter has been in the middle of for several years.

He is among the first to call attention to a problem only recently becoming apparent—congressional "micromanagement" of the Pentagon. This "over-oversight," resulting from the solons' conspicuous efforts to sleuth out $750 toilet seats, has added substantially to the Defense Department's red tape problems. For example, the number of reports required of the Pentagon by Congress increased by 1,172 percent between 1970 and 1984.

Courter concludes about the Defense Department's problems: "the enemy is us"—a courageous position, given his indictment of Congress along with the usual suspects of bureaucratic excrescence, inter-service rivalry, and inadequate accountability within DOD.

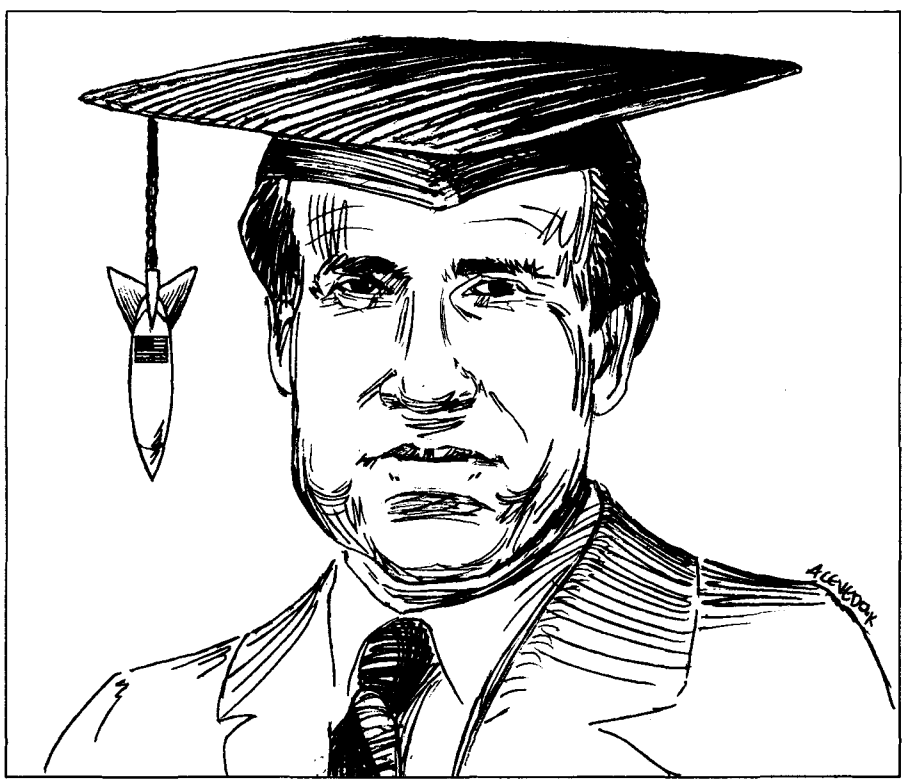
Courter also speaks with considerable authority about strategic defense, for here too he is right in the middle of the debate. The SDI program, which he has enthusiastically supported from its inception, is now commonly linked with his name. He is one of a group of Republican congressmen known as the "Gang of Five"—the others are Senators Malcolm Wallop, Dan Quayle, and Pete Wilson, and Rep. Jack Kemp—who are laboring strenuously to forge a coalition in support of near-term deployment. Look for these names to pop up often as SDI becomes the centerpiece of the Reagan agenda during the Administration's last eighteen months.

None of the selections in this book is current enough to address the recent technological advances in SDI that warrant enthusiasm for early deployment. Courter does, however, perform some timely work in discussing the reasons why the ABM treaty should not stand as an obstacle to SDI development and deployment. This is the intellectual labor now confronting the Reagan Administration as it gets its ducks in a row on SDI, and no one will prove an abler ally in Congress than Courter.

While Courter is not precisely in the eye of the storm on the book's other topics, his position on the House Armed Services Committee involves him in all defense-related issues. His views generally coincide with what are perceived as the Administration's, but the Courter prescriptions are more fleshed out than the Reagan policies. The subject of terrorism is a case in point. In a fascinating piece that ran in *Policy Review*, Courter examines in detail the methods of anti-terrorism and the surprising record of successes. The detail gives needed weight and credibility to the oft-repeated assertions of U.S. resolve to resist terrorism. The rhetoric by itself has come to seem empty, but to read Courter is to realize something can be done.

Courter is not reluctant to criticize the Administration when the logic of his positions dictates he do so, although he appears to be judicious in selecting appropriate forums for breaking ranks. In a speech before the Conservative Political Action Conference, a group receptive to criticisms of

Gordon Jackson is a writer living in Alexandria, Virginia.



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Reagan from the right, Courter took the President to task for speaking out of both sides of his mouth on Soviet aggression, and for continuing to give diplomatic recognition to the Sandinistas while funding an attempt to overthrow them. Courter has a valid point. If the Administration expects to project a coherent policy toward the Soviets, it should be consistent in its rhetoric. The problems the Administration now faces in getting Congress to go along with scrapping the ABM treaty are exacerbated by its puzzling refusal on different occasions to release information about Soviet violations of the treaty. The Courter approach would be to regard arms control as one component of national security, but to proceed with it only in the light of unflinching candor about Soviet behavior.

It is difficult to find anything to criticize in this collection other than trifles. Courter might have thought a little harder in his introductory remarks, which attempt to identify reasons for the inherent superiority of Western democracy to Marxist totalitarianism. Courter believes the idea that trumps Marxism is "that all human beings are naturally equal and free in their right to govern themselves. Liberal democracy is the political form the idea of natural equality takes."

But that's an easy one for the dialecticians, who would argue that the only meaningful equality is economic, and civil liberties such as the right to vote are merely sops to keep the economically oppressed proletariat pacified. A better formulation, dealing perhaps with different moral conceptions of the universe and meeting squarely the question of religious belief, would have cost Courter a little more effort. He is hardly the first pol to dance over this question with a bit of boilerplate about equality and freedom, but it will take more compelling arguments to put to rout the notion of U.S.-Soviet moral equivalence, which is one of Courter's aims.

Nor, on the evidence of this book, has he yet become a phrase-maker of the first rank. The prose sometimes grinds by like box cars on a slow freight train. There is always an earnestness in Courter's style, not surprising in someone who has chosen to build his career around mastery of the sobering facts of U.S. strategic requirements and who apparently has long felt called to serious public service. His résumé includes stints with the Peace Corps and Legal Services, organizations not noted for producing conservative Republican congressmen.

After lobbying for a position on the Armed Services Committee in order to champion New Jersey's Picatinny Arsenal, Courter soon found himself drawn irresistibly by the panoply of strategic issues. His emergence as in-House expert on the subject gives the Republican party a voice potentially as influential as Sam Nunn's if not more so. Courter's frank acknowledgement that he is a conservative Republican means that he can be more forthright and forceful than Nunn, who always must accommodate the views of the McGovernite wing of his party, as in his recent about-face on SDI deployment.

There is speculation that Courter may try to join Nunn in the Senate next year. An undistinguished first-term Democrat, Frank Lautenberg, defends the seat, and Courter has some obvious political assets that include unqualified support of the hugely popular governor, Thomas Kean, and an issue, strategic defense, that should play well with New Jersey's many blue-collar Democrats. But for now the word is no go. Courter thinks he's having a strong impact on defense policy where he is, and is reluctant to jeopardize that hard-won influence.

Wherever his career takes him, he deserves the attention of conservatives. Given Courter's unusual interest in opinion journalism and constant efforts to air his views in the nation's commentary pages—of which he makes as good use as anyone in Congress—you can rest assured that the nation will be hearing a lot more from him. □

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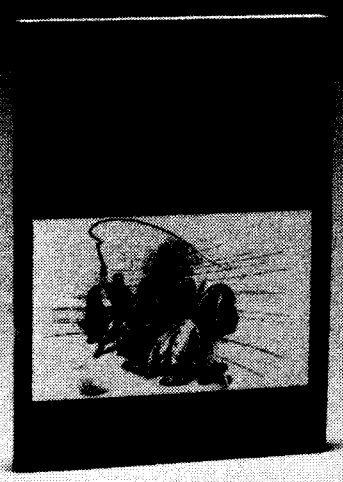

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AFTER THE NIGHTMARE: A SURVIVOR OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION REPORTS ON CHINA TODAY

Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro/Alfred A. Knopf/$16.95

Susan Ruel

Like China itself, Liang Heng has led a life filled with vicissitudes. In his autobiographical first book, *Son of the Revolution*, written with his American wife Judith Shapiro, he describes how the tumultuous experience of growing up during Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) converted him to belief in fortune-telling. Having survived a dark night of the soul in which, falsely accused of being a "counterrevolutionary" and threatened with jail, he is tempted to commit suicide, Liang is inexplicably released the next day. "It is no wonder I believed in fate," he writes. "My life was just that crazy."

Under Deng Xiaoping, life in China unquestionably became safer and more comfortable, but no country can change overnight, especially a tradition-bound one like China. In the closing chapter of *Son of the Revolution*, Liang bemoans the ignorance of Hunanese middle school students whom he taught in 1981, well into the "enlightened" era of Deng:

> I expected to see great differences between the education these post-Cultural Revolution-era young people were receiving and my own "Revolutionary" education, which had been so narrow and burdened with slogans. But to my surprise, little had changed. The blind obedience that had made the Cultural Revolution possible was being fostered still. No one was being taught how to think.

Having taught at the Shanghai Foreign Language Institute until late in 1982, I can attest that even in a city much closer to the pulse of national politics than landlocked Hunan, mind-numbing propaganda reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution lived on, in spite of the economic reforms.

This is not surprising when one recalls that the reforms were born less of liberalization than of failures in the Chinese economy and the need to make changes so people could eat. It was in 1979, the same year that Deng permitted the agricultural sector to adopt the "responsibility system," that he also waged a crackdown on the Democracy Wall movement, rounding up dissidents and throwing them in jails and labor camps, where many remain today.

In 1983, a full four years after Deng had instituted the economic reforms in agriculture, he launched an anti-spiritual pollution campaign. Chinese accused of petty crimes or caught wearing Western clothes and listening to Western music were punished. Many were put to death. Liang himself writes that he was "convinced" the campaign would "lead to another Cultural Revolution." Mercifully, the crackdown waned in early 1984.

Why then, in the September 1985 issue of *Life* magazine, did Liang and Shapiro write about Liang's trip back to China as if it were the return of the prodigal son? In a mere four years, Liang seems to have forgotten everything he has ever known about the never-ending cyclical upheavals of Chinese life.

Upon learning that one of his old friends had joined the Chinese Communist Party, Liang writes that he was at first nonplussed, then elated. He makes the following analysis of his friend's transformation:

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Joined the Party? Became a leader? I could hardly believe it. In the past, we had stayed as far away from the Party and its activities as possible. Those applying to join were usually hypocritical activists and class spies, hated by all. . . .

Half a page later, explaining that supporters of the economic reforms were joining the Party to dilute the ranks of old-guard leftists, Liang concludes, "I could not help admiring my honest old friend for his courage in taking on these knotty problems and wondered how he would acquire the political skills needed to survive." While noting that "what the Party seemed so freely to have given, tomorrow it could as easily take away," Liang ends the article with a roseate assessment of how China has changed since he left. That magazine article was expanded to book-length and became *After the Nightmare: A Survivor of the Cultural Revolution Reports on China Today.*

But between the *Life* article and the book came yet another piece, in the *New York Review of Books.* In that story, Liang and Shapiro voice reasons why they cannot be unabashedly bullish on China: "In our view, the Party has gone as far as it will go in loosening control on speech and belief. To relax them much further would put its position as ruling party in jeopardy. . . ." Yet, in their book-length amplification of these magazine articles, the authors include few cautionary notes, indeed few editorial judgments of any kind, save for sanguine asides on how much better life in China is today.[1] It is clear what sort of tone is being set in the opening pages of *After the Nightmare.* "I had departed for the United States as a dissident, believing I would never see China again," Liang writes. Then a Chinese official in Washington "suggested to my surprise it was high time I go back and have a look for myself." The official suggests that the "general mood of the country was good. . . . Great changes for the better were under way in China." The opening description of Liang's hometown of Changsha immediately conveys his new attitude; he gapes at the abundance of bicycles and motorcycles and notes that a new glass skyscraper has shot up.

After the Nightmare is written in narrative form, much like *Son of the Revolution* was. Yet the conclusions that may be drawn from the random testimonies of people with whom the couple happened to speak during their quick trip through seven provinces cannot be compared with the truths to be derived from the lifelong experiences of one human being. The authors interview Liang's relatives, several former Red Guards, three unfortunate women who were victims of the Cultural Revolution, a leading architect of the economic reforms, and a number of farmers. The implication is made occasionally that the authors agree with the people they are interviewing, but Liang and Shapiro never fully explain what they think. The fact that the book lacks an index makes it even harder to analyze.

Far more disturbing than the book's formal flaws is a non-judgmental quality that verges on amorality. Considering all the traumas revealed in *Son of the Revolution,* the couple returned to China the way an abused wife might return to her husband. Yet how easily they condone such outrages as mass executions, female infanticide, political imprisonment, religious discrimination, and artistic repression. Even the stark moral issues of the Cultural Revolution turn murky. Liang's old friend Peng Ming, who with Liang took part personally in the detention and torture of a noted concert pianist and later was associated with the Gang of Four, is portrayed as a great guy.

Still more upsetting is the way the authors present, in a playful, almost bantering tone devoid of any comment save irony, an anecdote on how the responsibility system has led to a resurgence of female baby killing in the countryside:

> Then quietly, the problem was resolved. The baby disappeared during the night. The Yangs let it be known that she had been taken away by the same ghosts who had entered her mother and robbed her of the boy that was hers by right. . . . Then the county officials came and made an investigation. To everyone's surprise, the unfortunate father was taken off to spend a year in prison for murder! It was so unfair, the Guos complained. What else could a man in his position have been expected to do?

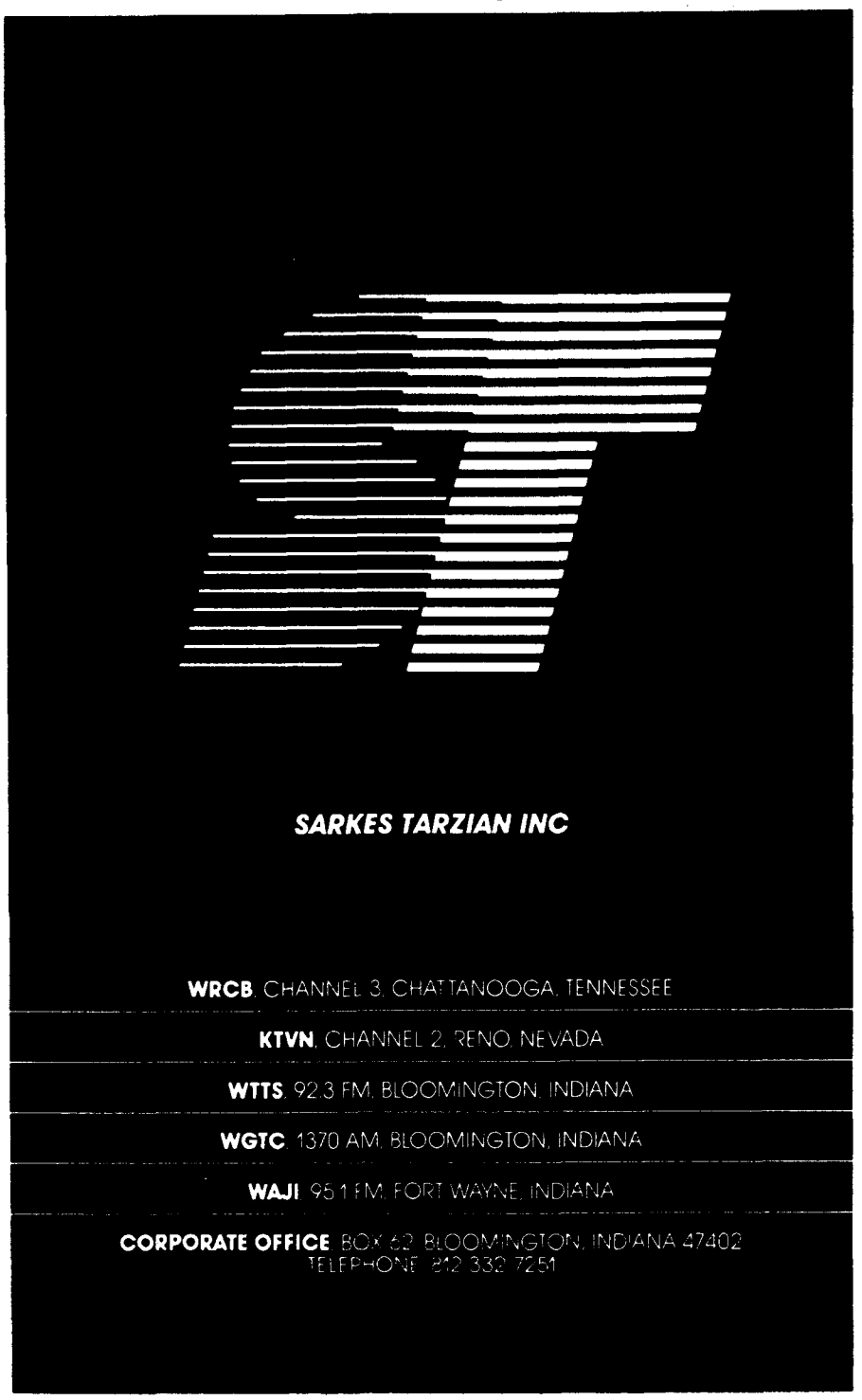
I have read *After the Nightmare* four times now, combing it for straightforward expressions of opinion and philosophical passages. All I can come up with are several paragraphs, a few phrases, and some writing between the lines that hints the authors agree with this or that viewpoint, in a monologue delivered by somebody else.

It is difficult to understand what motivates Liang and Shapiro to editorialize so little. Why have they failed to express their opinions fully? Are they genuinely confused about what is going on in China? Have they decided that the best way to influence policy-making in China is to flatter and cajole? Do they simply want continued access to China in order to make a career out of writing books on the subject?

Answers can be found in Liang's autobiography. It is a truism of Sinology that Chinese history has unfolded in an endless series of oscillations between strictness and laxity on the part of the authorities. As the recent wave of student demonstrations and subsequent suppression of dissent have shown, anyone familiar with the vagaries of Chinese public policy can be sure of but one thing: no condition is permanent. No one knows this better than Liang Heng, whose autobiography illustrates what a sharp memory he possesses. Endearingly nicknamed "Little Hunan" when he served as a mascot Red Guard, Liang soon found himself demoted to the dregs of society, at the mercy of his family's shifting political fortunes. As he himself states in *Nightmare*: "People shot to the heights and plummeted to the depths in the space of a moment. Sometimes it seemed one could never be certain of anything in China . . ." This tells me that Liang knows better than to hope for an unbroken march of progress in China.

While Liang warns of the dangers of "sloughing off the Cultural Revolution like a bad dream," that seems to be precisely what he has done. Whatever his reason, he has chosen to fall silent on the very lesson China taught him best: that the Chinese people still are not protected from tyranny by an

[1]Nor does the book *Cold Winds, Warm Winds: Intellectual Life in China Today,* written just before *Nightmare* and recently reprinted by Wesleyan University Press, shed much light on what its authors think. The book provides a dispassionate summary of the passionate subject of the shifting climates of Chinese intellectual freedom from 1979-85. In the authors' stunning words: "Although an enormous number of arrests and executions were carried out as part of an autumn crackdown on crime, such important concerns as political imprisonment, violations of due process and capital punishment are beyond our scope except insofar as they affected the general climate for intellectual freedom."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authentic system of law. Until that problem is addressed, the profits and losses of the individual Chinese lemonade-stand entrepreneur are of far less significance than Liang and Shapiro would have Westerners believe. As an old woman quoted in the book remarks, "Only a fool forgets the pain of a wound once it has healed." □

DARE TO BELIEVE
Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger/Crossroad/$16.95

Franz M. Oppenheimer

Until recently the influence of the Catholic Church in France was on the wane. The Church was split between reactionaries on her right and crypto-Marxists on her left. The vast majority of French people no longer went to mass. Now Cardinal Lustiger has made the Catholic Church once again a powerful voice in the land. The defeat of the Socialist government's scheme to "establish a great, unified and lay system of national education," and to make the schools "the crucible of the class struggle," was made possible by Cardinal Lustiger's leadership of the popular uprising in defense of independent private Catholic schools. More than one million French people took to the streets in Paris on June 24, 1984, to protest the Socialists' school bill, just about three weeks after the Cardinal had denounced the bill in an interview given to *Le Monde*. Less than three weeks after that demonstration President Mitterrand withdrew the bill. The Cardinal's Paris radio station, *Radio Notre Dame*, his sermons, books, articles, and interviews have a daily impact on French life. With all her problems, the French Catholic Church is gaining a new vibrancy.

Some of the Cardinal's sermons and interviews are collected in *Dare to Believe*, and reading them makes us understand why Cardinal Lustiger is listened to. He was born Aaron Lustiger, the son of poor Polish Jewish immigrants who kept a shop in Paris. His father learned to speak French only badly. When Hitler's army invaded France in 1940, Lustiger's father fled from Paris to the relative safety of unoccupied France, while his mother stayed in Paris to mind the store; the family "had to eat." Soon her shop was confiscated and her apartment pillaged. Finally she was arrested, deported, and, like most relatives of the Cardinal, murdered in Auschwitz. But Aaron, who was in a boarding school, managed to escape into unoccupied France where he joined his father, worked in a factory, started studying chemistry, took part in underground activities, and survived. He was 19 when the war was over.

When he was only ten and the family was still together, Aaron managed to get hold of the key to a bookcase his parents kept locked, and there among other books unsuitable for little Jewish boys he found a Protestant Bible in French, which he read secretly from beginning to end. And thus started a process that Cardinal Lustiger says was "more like a crystallization than a conversion" and led to the boy's decision to become a Christian. In 1940, when he was 14, his parents gave him their reluctant permission to become baptized.

They were very consciously Jewish in the ethnic sense, but not only non-practicing, but non-religious Jews who believed that "rabbis, priests, they all talk the same rubbish." Thus they could not well oppose their son's decision, for they had no religious alternative to offer him. Yet, though baptized, Lustiger, now Aaron Jean-Marie, determined to remain a Jew, a Christian Jew, an identity not widely welcome today.

Although Christian Jews remained accepted as Jews within the Jewish community for some 100 years after the death of Christ, today the stereotype Jewish response to baptized Jews is scandalized rejection. The dominant Zionist posture permits Jews to be anything other than Christians: they may dabble in Buddhism like Ben Gurion, be Marxists, and even proclaim that there is no God. In turn the stereotype rejection of Jewish Christians is predicated on the conviction that only a rejection of Judaism and Jewishness can explain a Jew's conversion to Christianity.

The Cardinal's parents must have been perplexed when their son told them: "I am not leaving you. I'm not going over to the enemy. I am becoming what I am. I do not stop being a Jew; on the contrary, I am discovering another way of being a Jew."

This theme of remaining a Jew runs through the longest chapter of this book, the transcript of an interview with two Israeli journalists published originally in the Israeli daily paper *Yediot Habaronot* in January 1982. In the interview the reader senses beneath the courtesies some tension on the part of the interviewers, when this Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church makes it clear not only that he is just as Jewish as they are, but that he found being a Christian "a better way of being Jewish," and "my nomination as bishop meant for me that all of a sudden it was as though the crucifix was wearing the yellow star."

In the same vein Cardinal Lustiger must have disconcerted an interviewing rabbi when he told him, "By embracing Christianity, I finally discovered the values of Judaism. . . . I saw Abraham and David in the stained glass of the cathedral of Chartres."

On his part the Cardinal cannot find it easy to have his Jewish condition constantly drawn into question. When an interviewer from *Der Spiegel* asked him bluntly whether it wasn't "a contradiction" to become a bishop and to say "I remain a Jew," he replied: "I did not run away from [the Jewish condition] in the days of the yellow star and the concentration camps; I do not see why one would tear me away from it today."

While the Cardinal thus does not give an inch when insisting on being a Jew, he becomes somewhat ambiguous in those same interviews when he is asked about the most sensitive question that looms in all contemporary efforts at Jewish-Christian dialogue. In the United States at least, the organizations of the Jewish establishment require as a condition of such a dialogue that Christians forgo any missionary intention. Yet the Gospel commands them to go and teach all nations. When Cardinal Lustiger is asked: "Does Catholicism not have a policy of conversion of the Jews anymore?" he answers: "If you mean by this a missionary activity *specifically geared to the Jews*, no. Nobody among today's Catholics is aiming to take the Jews away from Judaism *at all costs*. But if a Jew wants to convert and takes the initiative in this direction, we do not reject him or her." (Emphasis mine.) Would this answer have satisfied the American Jewish guardians of the dialogue?

True, the Cardinal seems not to see a need for the conversion of the Jews, whom he sees as having been given their religious mission under the first covenants the Lord made with Abraham and Noah, and who are therefore a living testimony to the Lord's purpose. The very meaning of the word "catholic" is used by the Cardinal to justify placing the Jews apart from heretics and pagans. "Catholic," he says, does not mean "universal," but the totality of two separate entities, Jews and non-Jews. As best as I can understand him, he thus believes that the Jews occupy the original mansion in our Father's house and non-Jewish Christians another mansion.

This view comes close to that of Rabbi Jakob Petuchowski, a professor of Jewish theology at the Reform Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, who wrote in the Swiss journal *Orientierung* of March 31, 1985, in discussing the problems of Christian-Jewish dialogue: "It will no longer suffice to know of the common 'source' of both religions, but one must see God's Providence and God's Mission in the different roads the two religions have taken. . . . One could even make it a condition that the recognition of the continuing existence of *both* religions, will be accepted by both sides as God's will and as a condition of

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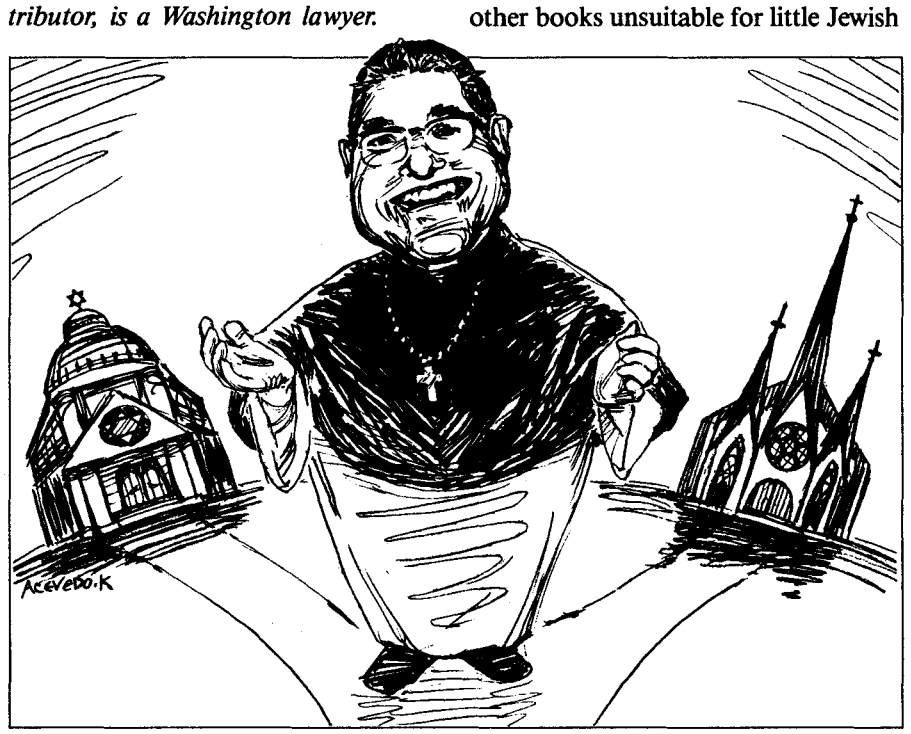

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such Christian-Jewish dialogue."

What Cardinal Lustiger and Rabbi Petuchowski have in common is their concentration on religious truth, as opposed to political concerns, which, in Petuchowski's courageously expressed view, have on the Jewish side been largely substituted for religious concerns.

In observing the Cardinal's Israeli interlocutors' preoccupation with the supposed conflict between being a Roman Catholic priest and a Jew, I was struck by the omission of any related questions about the Jewish Cardinal's Frenchness. In the American Jewish and Zionist establishments it is dogma that Jews have a separate ethnic identity, and that German Jews, in particular, were totally deluded in their conviction of being as German as any other Germans. Thus when Cardinal Lustiger speaks as unselfconsciously as a Frenchman, totally immersed in France's Catholic history, tradition, and problems, as if he were a direct descendant of St. Louis, one might have expected a few barbs from the Israeli journalists along the line of how can you, a Polish Jew, speak almost as an embodiment of the Church of France? As I have discussed in earlier issues of *TAS*, anti-Semitism was a particularly virulent French disease, and the Catholic clergy and bourgeoisie were its most exposed carriers. Indeed, if anything proves the Lord's sense of humor, it is the appointment of a Polish Jew to be the Cardinal of Paris. If one of the handful of German Jews still left in Germany were a high Christian prelate, and spoke unselfconsciously, as a Jew, a Christian, *and* a German steeped in German culture, the reactions of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and B'nai B'rith would make their reaction to Bitburg a vicar's tea party by comparison.

Perhaps reactionary trends in the French episcopate may have at some time interfered with Cardinal Lustiger's career. There is a hint in a recent book on the French episcopate that Jean-Marie Lustiger's removal as chaplain to the Sorbonne and his appointment as rector of an ordinary Paris parish was brought about by old-fashioned types of the French hierarchy who did not take to Father Lustiger's charismatic personality. It was Pope John Paul II who pulled Father Lustiger out of obscurity to make him bishop of Orleans in 1979, Archbishop of Paris in 1981, and a cardinal in 1983.

It is clear that as Archbishop of Paris one of his most pressing preoccupations is the decline of vocations for the priesthood and the resulting scarcity of priests in France. He states as a fact that the *curé de campagne*, a significant figure in French culture and literature, will exist no more, and that the new generation of priests are no longer men who have grown up in a protected practicing Catholic environment and who accepted the discipline of the seminary as a matter of course, but men who come to priesthood with critical minds after having had other careers. He compares this rupture in tradition with the upheaval in Catholicism produced by the French Revolution that in 1793 wanted to "dechristianize" France by suppressing all Christian references in the mores and the usages of the country.

Yet when he comes to discuss the mandatory celibacy of priests, which is one, if not the major, cause of the loss of priests—a French friend said the other day, "Nobody gets married any more except priests"—he rejects peremptorily any thought of reform. His defense of mandatory celibacy is surprisingly weak when compared with the lucidity of his other views. It is the passionate defense by a mystic who sees the "spiritual choice" of celibacy as a desirable sacrifice to the Lord. However convincing his arguments may be in justifying his own choice and in justifying an *option* of celibacy, they are not convincing in justifying *mandatory* celibacy. Indeed his effort to show that the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches are not all that different from the Roman Church in the practice of insisting on celibate bishops and prohibiting the remarriage of widowed priests struck me as specious. After all, in the Orthodox churches a graduate from the seminary *must* marry to be eligible to become a parish priest.

From this illustration of the Cardinal's conservative theological views, it is clear why he makes both the political and the theological left uncomfortable, even as his concern for the poor countries, his outspoken social views, and his origins, make some on the right uncomfortable. He himself emphasizes that being a Christian is no longer a comfortable status in a largely secular society, for conformity not dissent is the comfortable human condition. Moreover, he must distress ideologues on the left and on the right by insisting that political perfection is not of this world: "If they imagine that they can achieve justice in this world, if they want to attain an ideal of justice on earth, they reduce it to the measure of their desires and ideas: this is the source of totalitarianism."

Parts of the collection reviewed may speak only to readers interested in religion. But the thoughts of someone who is clearing away a century's accumulation of rubbish in an ageless institution should be of interest to all. □

SKEPTICAL ENGAGEMENTS

Frederick Crews/Oxford University Press/$19.95

George Sim Johnston

If the major intellectual event of the seventies was the death of old-fashioned political Marxism, the epochal event of the eighties is the disembowelment of Darwin and Freud—the two other members of the trinity which rules over the modern mind. Marxism was hit by the proverbial freight train of history; only a few lingering ideologues are blind to the practical consequences of the doctrine. The debunking of Darwin and Freud is running along altogether different lines. There has not been anything so spectacular as the Gulag and the Cambodian genocide to brush all doubt aside. The arguments are perforce more subtle, the mustered evidence less accessible to the newspaper-reading public. Also, while the most important witnesses against Marxism were people who were once on the inside, like Solzhenitsyn, the demolition of Darwin and Freud has been more the work of inspired amateurs operating outside the priesthood. For although there is much internal bickering among the professional elites who claim descent from either Darwin or Freud, they tend to close ranks when confronted with objections from the outside.

An American litigation lawyer named Norman Macbeth, for example, decided in the course of some vacation reading several years ago that Darwin's theory of evolution did not add up. If the higher organisms evolved one small step at a time from the primordial soup, how is it that all the available fossil evidence records only forward leaps so great that they can hardly be said to be evolutionary? Where is the "missing link" between, say, reptile and mammal? Where, for that matter, is the Ur-cat that, according to Darwinian theory, later differentiated itself into lions, tigers, and ocelots? And does Darwin really explain how a highly complex organ like an eye could simply just appear—by biological freak and in a state developed enough to prove its survival value—on some slippery creature feeling its way around the muck?

Macbeth published a little book called *Darwin Retried* which caused a disturbance among the professionals who ponder such matters at places like the Museum of Natural History in New York. As Tom Bethell pointed out in *Harper's*, there is now a significant contingent in the field of systematics—which involves the taxonomy of species—which believes that those evolutionary charts in every high school textbook illustrate, at best, an unlikely hypothesis.

Some of Macbeth's points about Darwin were made over fifty years ago by that paragon of common sense, G. K. Chesterton, who also pointed out why psychoanalysis and anthropology were profoundly mistaken in their assumption that human behavior can be explained scientifically. Nevertheless, Freud's essays and Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* have long been accepted as works of scientific merit, rather than for what they

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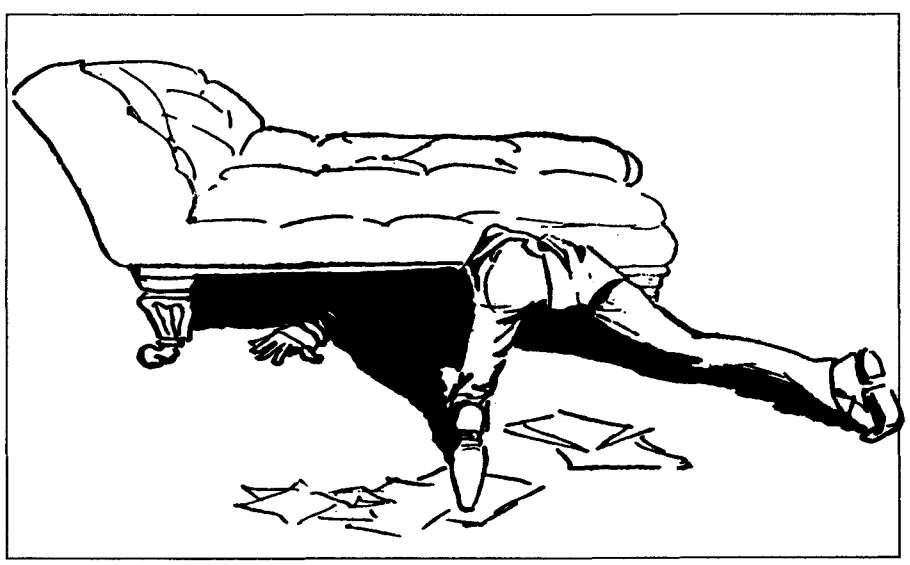

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are: inspired prose poems containing a great deal of nonsense and an occasional passing insight. Freud and Mead, we now know, both approached their subjects with self-fulfilling assumptions and dubious methodologies; but they were careful to wrap their reckless speculations in a cloak of scientific prudence.

Margaret Mead was a minor blip on the cultural radar compared to Sigmund Freud. Freud is the presiding genius of modern secular culture, which decrees that the purpose of life is not salvation, but "self-realization." No matter what our predisposition toward the Viennese doctor, we all to some extent think in the categories he devised. Artists and writers have concocted entire oeuvres around his speculations. In their case, the damage has not been significant, since it is possible to make good art around a bad theory. (Some of the impressionists believed in an atomistic theory of light which was later proved to be entirely false. This takes nothing away from the marvelous pointilist works of Signac.) But unfortunately, Freudian psychology, like Marxism, has a *praxis*. It is meant to change things. And here, as we learn from Frederick Crews in several powerful essays in this new collection, *Skeptical Engagements*, we run into grave trouble.

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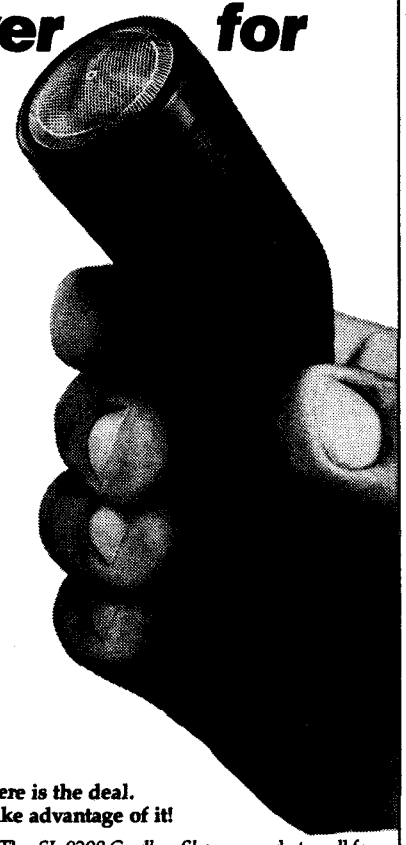

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Crews, of course, is only one of a number of intelligent critics to launch an unabashedly empirical assault against Freud in the past decade or so. He readily gives credit to some who preceded him, like Adolf Grünbaum, while slighting the groundwork of others, like John Murray Cuddihy, whose exposures of Freud have been based more on cultural and literary, rather than empirical, evidence. (In his brilliant *The Ordeal of Civility*, Cuddihy sees Freudian psychology, as well as Marxism, as a working out of the grievances of the newly emancipated Jews in the nineteenth century. The "ordeal" of assimilation, according to Cuddihy, was internalized in the ferocious bourgeois-bashing systems of these two thinkers.) Crews, who began as an old-fashioned literary critic, wields a brilliant forensic style, and these essays are an excellent place to start for anyone interested in the current dismantling of Freudian edifice.

Crews begins by discussing what one may gather from anyone who has spent ten or fifteen years in analysis: the record of classic Freudian therapy as a curative for neurotic disorders is atrocious. When it works at all, it is primarily among the relatively healthy and affluent, and, as Crews points out, there are other plausible explanations than Freud's for "successful" cases. (Just *talking* to someone has its therapeutic value, for example.) And when stacked up against the scores of other therapies that are available, psychoanalysis makes a dismal showing, even though it is by far the most expensive and time-consuming of any treatment.

Crews's dismissal of psychoanalysis is cogent, if somewhat cavalier. Most "Freudian" analysts have to some extent put Freud behind them. I am told by one analyst that there are few strict constructionists around anymore. Moreover, increasingly sophisticated methods of diagnosis and the efficacious use of drugs as a palliative (not a curative) have made clinical psychology more useful than in the past. Crews, however, is not interested in these later refinements. What interests him is the corruption of the high pure source—the questionable way Freud went about concocting such theories as the Oedipal Complex and the sexual etiology of neurosis and how these theories managed to permeate modern thought even though there is not a shred of evidence that they are true.

The widespread acceptance of Freud was in part accomplished by the careful crafting of the Master's public image by his disciples. Writers like Stefan Zweig, Ernest Jones, and Philip Rieff presented their mentor as a man of towering professional integrity and unimpeachable private morals. We now know—no thanks to the psychoanalytic bodyguard around the archival remains—that Freud was dark, ruthless, and dishonest. Crews presents the available evidence. Freud, it turns out, was not above stealing other people's ideas or lying about his cures or violating his Hippocratic oath by inflicting extreme and gratuitous pain on his patients or prescribing massive doses of a dangerous drug (Freud was the original Cocaine Cowboy) or embracing every quack biological theory which circulated in the late nineteenth century. And yet even a thinker of the caliber of Lionel Trilling took Freud as a kind of intellectual demi-god whose integrity was never to be questioned.

Crews's discussion of Freud's unsound methods is devastating, as is his discussion of the resistance of both analysts and intellectuals to the mounting empirical evidence against Freud's theories: ". . . psychoanalysis shows every sign of being not just a method and a psychology but also a faith, with all that this implies about psychic immunity from rationally based criticism. Like other faiths, Freudianism readily rebounds when confronted with seemingly fatal objections, for it is inseparable from its believer's private sense of spiritual vitality and worth." Freudian psychology, like Marxism, provides the initiated with a totalist vision of human behavior which is both neatly reductive and profoundly inimical to traditional values. For this reason, Freud has long been a darling of the intellectual left, even though his conclusions about human nature were deeply pessimistic and anti-utopian. (Freud, in fact, thought that Marxism's desire to abolish private property was based on a profound misreading of human nature.)

In the second section of his book, Crews moves from Freud to the current state of Marxism. Embarrassed by events, by the fact that not a single one of Marx's major prophecies has come true, Marxists have retreated from the streets into the academy where, immune to history's messy contingencies,

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they have been able to vaporize Marx's teachings into a diffuse aesthetic atmosphere in which bits of opaque jargon float like shimmering motes. According to Crews, who must have extraordinary stamina to have bushwhacked through the prose of people like Derrida, Habermas, and Althusser, both Marxism and psychoanalysis are now presented by the academic vanguard as *non*scientific, so that they can "be absolved from empirical scrutiny and employed for utopian speculative ends."

In the field of literary criticism, this Marxistical dispensation has brought about the methodology known as deconstructionism, a corrosive solvent which can be applied to any literary text to remove from it any trace of 2,500 years of Western culture. One would like to dismiss this nonsense as, in Crews's words, a "sandbox amusement for the ultrasophisticated," but unfortunately history shows that the intellectual onanism of the few can have dire consequences for the many. The professoriat's trafficking in nihilism is an ominous phenomenon, and critics like Crews perform a valuable service by monitoring it with such insight and intelligence.

But one puts down this collection of essays with the same question one has for every critic whose main enterprise is poking holes in other people's logic: What exactly do *you* believe in? The only reply one can infer from this book is, "Why, democracy and pluralism." But in order to survive, democracy and pluralism require more from their defenders than simply "skeptical engagements" with their adversaries. □

THE MIDDLE GENERATION: THE LIVES AND POETRY OF DELMORE SCHWARTZ, RANDALL JARRELL, JOHN BERRYMAN AND ROBERT LOWELL
Bruce Bawer/Archon Books/$25.00

Jacob Weisberg

It's no wonder many people find the personal histories of the poets Bruce Bawer calls "the Middle Generation" more engrossing than their writings. The pain-filled lives and untimely deaths of Schwartz, Jarrell, Berryman, and Lowell follow the narrative structure of the book of Job, without the happy ending. Undeserved though their sufferings may have been, these poets seem to have struggled in vain against their pathetic destinies. Reading Haffenden's Berryman, Hamilton's Lowell, Atlas's Schwartz, and Eileen Simpson's *Poets in their Youth*, we watch horrified (but enthralled) as the sensitive souls fall prey to alcoholism, insomnia, drug addiction, obsessive religiosity, and divorce. Always, the story ends with a lurid slide into madness, suicide, or both.

There is nothing unhealthy about being fascinated by the personal lives of literary and historical figures. But in the case of these poets, tawdry melodrama threatens to submerge their literary output altogether. Once we learn about the mental and physical maladies that afflicted Schwartz et al., we necessarily devalue their work. How, we ask, could anyone so stewed and nutty write cogently? James Atlas's superb biography of Delmore Schwartz falls prey to this logic. Atlas tends to view Schwartz's late, erratic poetry as a symptom of pharmaceutically induced psychosis. According to his view, it is miraculous that any of Schwartz's late writing coheres. But if we read Schwartz's late verse without foreknowledge of his lunacy, it appears beautifully fluid and nearly cogent.

Arriving on the heels of these tell-all biographies and memoirs, Bruce Bawer's first book does an admirable thing. Rather than further satisfying our prurient interest in the demise of the poets, Bawer reconnects their lives to their work. The bizarre, self-destructive behavior of the Middle Generation poets was not extraneous to their poetry, he argues, but part and parcel of it. "Twin symptoms of a single malady," he calls them. As Bawer writes of John Berryman: "Had he been 'cured' of one of these symptoms, he would almost certainly have been 'cured' of the other." By considering the writings of the poets in the context of their life histories, Bawer does justice to both.

These four writers lived strangely parallel lives. Born during the decade preceding the First World War, all lacked healthy relationships with their dads. Three of them lost their fathers at very early ages: Jarrell's and Schwartz's skipped town while Berryman's killed himself. Lowell's father was technically present, but as a henpecked sap he more or less fit the pattern. These absent fathers instilled feelings of resentment, hatred, and guilt in the young poets. Not coincidentally, all developed unhealthy love-hate relationships with their mothers.

Bawer traces symptoms of these "turbulent childhoods" into "alienated adulthoods." None of the Middle Generation poets slept soundly or maintained a happy relationship with a woman. The experience of split families sent the poets looking for intellectual father figures, too. Bawer makes a convincing case that the group's obsessive devotion to T. S. Eliot was a way of replacing their missing fathers.

For the Middle Generation, Eliot stood as a distant, intellectual patriarch who commanded unflinching respect as he dictated rules for verse and criticism. The poets came of age considering Eliot the sole arbiter of poetic style and content. Schwartz in particular stood so in awe of Great Tom that he couldn't even bear to meet Eliot's brother. To meet Old Possum himself would have been like shaking hands with the Lord. And obey him they did. Following Eliot's essays, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "The Metaphysical Poets," Berryman, Schwartz, and Jarrell wrote poems that were impersonal, erudite, and metaphysically ingenious. Bawer is convincing in his analysis of how Schwartz's early poems, such as the oft-anthologized "In the Naked Bed, in Plato's Cave," exemplify an "Eliotic" rather than a "personal" sensibility.

After World War II (by which time each of the Middle Generation poets was headed toward madness) they repudiated Eliot. They began to write in a far more confessional vein, and developed new affinities with the United States and the poetry of their North American forebears. Bawer analyzes the middle and late careers of Berryman, Schwartz, Jarell, and Lowell with considerable acumen. He traces Auden's influence on Jarrell, and Yeats's on Berryman, line by line. But Bawer's generalizations about the "generic life" all four shared begin to wear thin by the time he arrives at the poems they wrote during the 1950s.

Certainly all of their poetic voices became less "Eliotic." But this evolution did not take the form of religious conversion in all cases. Although Schwartz broke with Eliot in an outspoken way, he retained his old obsession in a mutated form. And although Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* violates Eliot's critical precepts of the 1910s and '20s, Bawer doesn't convince me that Lowell was ever a true disciple of Eliot in the sense Schwartz and Berryman were. Bawer's relentless application of the generational formula also forces him to neglect female poets such as Jean Stafford and Elizabeth Bishop, whose work might illuminate that of their male contemporaries in a fresh way. To make one last complaint, Bawer lacks confidence in his own assertions, too often deferring to elder critics.

But such humility is always refreshing from a writer for the *New Criterion* and *The American Spectator*. Although seldom daring or brilliant, Bawer's analysis is consistently careful and readable. Unlike certain other young critics of the neoconservative persuasion, Bawer doesn't let politics dictate his literary views. He's capable of appreciating a work even when he disagrees with its author. Most importantly, Bawer communicates a genuine passion for the poetry of Schwartz, Lowell, Jarrell, and Berryman. His study has the great virtue of expressing his own fondness and renewing our interest in these brilliant and troubled writers. □

Jacob Weisberg, a former reporter-researcher at the New Republic, *will be studying at Oxford University this fall.*

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BLACK ROOTS

by Andrew Ferguson

E. M. Forster visited Chicago in the late forties, and in a letter to a friend he quickly dismissed that big-shouldered town—that burly city of commerce and industry, that brawling workshop of the world—as if describing a vaguely unpleasant face he had seen in a crowd: "a facade of skyscrapers facing a lake," he wrote, "and behind the facade every type of dubiousness." Forster was a man of tender sensibilities, to say the least, and the city is much changed since he passed through it, but dubiousness is still a good word to describe what goes on behind that lakefront facade. In town for a week in February, to watch the recent mayoral primary between Harold Washington and Jane Byrne, I stopped at a ramshackle hot dog stand on Milwaukee Avenue and saw advertised—and paid for and ate part of—a "red hot on a croissant, with aged swiss and Dijon." Over the *i* in Dijon there was an *accent aigu*.

• • •

When I got to town I embarked on the standard journalistic research, which is to say I immediately called up a colleague and had him tell me what the hell was going on. Concerning Chicago politics, the method has dubious utility:

> Ever since Washington beat Byrne in the 1983 primary, she's been figuring out how to get back at him. She's been running her campaign for seventeen months. By now she's shaken every goddamn hand in town. Twice. Two other white Democrats are running in the general election as independents, Ed Vrdolyak and Tom Hynes, and there's a Republican too, Don Haider. Vrdolyak says he's telling his people to vote for Byrne in the primary, but really he's telling them to vote in the Republican primary for a guy named Wardingly, because Wardingly calls himself Spanky the Clown—it's what he does for a living—and if he's nominated as a Republican, which in this town wouldn't take all that many votes, he'll be easier to beat than Haider, because who wants Spanky the Clown for mayor? Byrne's old enemies, the Daley brothers—sons of the late mayor, RIP—still have some clout and they're endorsing her, but really they want her to lose, so they can support Hynes and beat Vrdolyak, who thinks that maybe the Daleys are really going to come out for him, which they won't because it looks like they've cut some kind of deal with Hynes. Hynes says he's telling his people to vote against Washington no matter what, but privately he's saying he wants Washington to win the primary because then Vrdolyak will drop out of the race and he'll have a clean shot at Washington, because he thinks he'll be easier to beat than Byrne, which he won't be, but that's politics.
>
> Forster would have packed his bags.

• • •

Question: What do Jane Byrne and Harold Washington have in common? Answer: Black roots. Byrne invites those kinds of jokes, at least in part because she seems impenetrable to them. In her gayer moments she still makes Rosalynn Carter look like a drunken dancehall girl. Her most frequently aired TV ad showed her seated before a bookcase, staring straight into the camera and saying in her soft, flat monotone: "Love. Unity. Sharing. Pride. Hope. I want to make Chicago smile again." Then she frowned. Her campaign seemed stoutly oblivious to the dubious image many people had of her, and particularly of her tenure as mayor. "It was like that song," she said, "you know, 'Summertime, and the livin' is easy.' " Likewise, her campaign literature sang, "While Jane Byrne was mayor, Chicago was Vibrant! Exciting! Fun!" Others remembered the rapid deterioration of the city's economy and schools, the bloated payrolls, the enormous deficits, and her own personal volatility. "I'd get calls from her in the middle of the night, waking up my wife, my kids," said one businessman who served in her administration. "She'd be blurting. She'd say, 'I can make your house a goddamn parking lot, and don't think I won't do it, too.' Talk to anybody in this town who had to deal with her, and before five minutes is up the word 'bitch' enters the conversation."

• • •

Nevertheless, on primary day Jane Byrne won 47 percent of the vote, and not all of these were simple anti-Washington ballots. She has her constituency, bound to her by affection, old loyalties, and a kind of amorphous nostalgia for the way Chicago used to be, before the dubiousness got overwhelming. One brisk, sunny Saturday I followed her down to the 23rd ward on the city's Southwest side, a largely Slavic neighborhood hard up against the city line. With the alderman and a ward committeeman in train, she went door to door, marching up the swept sidewalks in her clipped military pace, then across the neatly trimmed lawns, from one small, blond-brick bungalow to the next. Young parents brought their babies out to be kissed. Middle-aged couples leaned down to speak to her, as if in confidence: "We got six votes in this house for you, Jane." A stout old woman, wearing stretch pants and gripping a Byrne sign at chest level, walked several paces behind. I guess this is Byrne country, I said. "Oh yeah. All the way with Jane. Look at her. That gal's got spunk. The way she walks!" What have you got against the Mayor? "Jane? I got nothing against her!" she said, astonished. I mean Mayor Washington. "Oh, him. I don't have nothing against him. He's just not—the truth of the matter is, if you're white you just do not exist in Harold Washington's mind." She swept her arm in front of her. "These are my kind of people. You know what I mean."

• • •

February was Black History month, coming fast on the heels of the first nationwide observance of Martin Luther King's birthday, and Washington rode the crest of this fortuitous wave, bobbing from one ex officio appearance to another. The Friday before election day, the Postal Service issued a stamp honoring Jean Baptiste de Sable, a black trader who in the 1790s was the first non-Indian to pitch camp at the mouth of the Chicago river. The nearest thing to a contemporary drawing of de Sable shows him as a wiry, fair-skinned West Indian, but the new stamp renders him a husky adventurer of glowing ebony—Fred Williamson in buckskin. The Postal Service held a ceremony in the lobby of the county office building, which was crowded with displays put together by Chicago school kids. One of the honorable-mention essays, by a third-grader, caught my eye: "Jean Baptiste de Sable was the first black man to make Chicago a great city by starting a trading post and then he fought in world war 2, he became a hero for his people and that is why he is a great man." I was puzzled for a minute, and then I remembered that Washington is a veteran of the war; in the kid's mind Washington and de Sable have probably been fused. When the mayor showed up to receive a special book of first issue stamps, the applause was tumultuous. In a brief speech, he made a couple of references to the "irony" of the fact that it took so long to honor Chicago's first settler who, as the phrase has it, happens to be black. Throughout the campaign he refused "to make race an issue," and as the black mayor of a city where more whites than blacks are registered to vote (about 48 percent to 44 percent), he knew there was no benefit, and probably a great deal of harm, in doing so. But he doesn't really need to. The theme of "black pride" subtends his administration and is the source of black Chicago's unshakeable devotion to him. On top of this, however, there is no denying that he is an immensely appealing figure, and a pol of the first water, a man who loves his work. After his talk at the de Sable event, he made a brief walking tour through the Loop, shaking hands, laughing, telling jokes, kissing pretty girls, hugging children, posing for pictures—all of it pulled off with burly informality and obvious relish. As the crowd swelled I followed the best I could, but I soon found myself pushed to the rear, next to an elderly black couple. The woman gave a running commentary, as if she were noisily watching her grandson at a school pageant: "Oh look at this, the sun is shining and just look at him, so nicely dressed, isn't that the handsomest scarf you ever saw, he's the prettiest thing," and when Washington heard her and backtracked to give her a hug, I thought she'd swoon. She steadied herself on her husband's elbow. "Mine eyes have never seen such glory," she said, and her husband beamed.

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On election night Mayor Washington's headquarters moved to the exhibition hall of the Hyatt Regency, a swanky hotel on north Michigan Avenue. Blue and white balloons were clustered round the pillars, and blue and white

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bunting draped everything else. I got there not long after the polls closed, and upon walking in the door found myself being shuffled along in a snake dance of enormous length. Before me and behind me people were swaying and clapping and singing "Sail On, Freedom," which I'd forgotten the words to. I assumed, correctly, that I was encountering the "Reverse Freedom Riders." In the brief week before the election, the riders had become something of a Chicago institution, appearing on the nightly news in their trademark yellow sweatshirts and inveighing against Klansmen, Forsythe County, Ronald Reagan, and the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners. A caravan of buses had brought them from Selma to the city, where the mayor greeted them at a downtown church service, and immediately Jane Byrne and even some journalists branded them as interlopers and "an insult to Chicagoans." The riders responded that they were just in town to help get out the vote—they did indeed do extensive work in the housing projects and on the West and South sides—and only meant to return the favor done them by all those nice Chicagoans who had come South to protest in Selma during the early sixties (this failed to resonate with Byrne supporters). Besides, one rider told me after I extricated her from the snake dance, they were sent by God. "What was I supposed to do?" she asked. "Deny Him? God spoke here in Chicago four years ago. He made Harold Washington mayor, and we have to see that he stays mayor. Today we have brought out a big black vote, a big Hispanic vote, and a pretty big white progressive vote."

• • •

Progressive is the key word. The problem with "black empowerment" in Chicago is that black politics are nowadays invariably the politics of the left; this takes the political struggle beyond race into deeper levels where ideas count, and in Washington's administration the ideas are relentlessly progressive: affirmative action quotas in the awarding of city contracts and the hiring of city workers, police cutbacks when the budget starts to billow, socialization of more city services (parking meter collections, for example), elaborate redistribution schemes. All of these are contained in the portmanteau, "reform." But Chicago holds problems that resist even reform. On the afternoon before primary day I went with the mayor on a walk through the Robert Taylor Homes, a vast high-rise complex in the heart of the South side, by acclamation the most desperate of the city's many public housing projects. The mayor was to walk from one end of the project to the middle of it, several blocks away, where he would hold an "impromptu rally" with Jesse Jackson, who throughout the primary campaign clung to the mayor like a bad smell. As we walked along the fire lane, with the buildings looming up on either side, the mayor's car cruised slowly in front of us, its p.a. system exhorting the residents to "Meet your Mayor." But this was a different Washington from the reveling pol I had followed through the Loop a few days before. He seldom smiled, and the glint was gone from his eye, and when the young men in shower caps ran up to touch him and then fell in line behind, chanting his name, prancing from side to side in boundless excitement, he looked pained. All around us the lawns and playgrounds were stripped bare. At street level the buildings were covered in graffiti. Several years ago, the balconies of the high-rises had been caged in, after reports circulated of untended children falling to their deaths. The sound system blared and on each floor, high above us, apartment doors opened slowly, and people appeared inside the cages in bathrobes and housecoats, resting their arms against the screening or waving languidly, sometimes calling out the mayor's name. Large pictures of Washington ascended in a vertical row from balcony to balcony. As he walked the wind picked up and dust swirled around him, and kids left their basketball games to join the procession, until by the time we reached Jackson's entourage the crowd was about a hundred strong. Jackson grabbed a bullhorn and did a few "I am somebody's" and the mayor, still looking ill at ease, told the crowd—most of them were kids, too young to vote—that they should vote on Tuesday, for their own good. Then Jesse handed the bullhorn back to a cop, and he and the mayor ducked into their car and drove away, back to the Loop, and the kids went back to basketball. As one of them dribbled away, I asked whether it wasn't a school day. "Don't go to school," he said. Why not, I asked. "I read this," he said, and pulled a book from his hip pocket, a denim-bound edition of the New Testament.

• • •

The city E. M. Forster visited—Sandburg's City of the Big Shoulders, the one of which Kipling wrote, "I know thy cunning and thy greed/Thy hard high lust and willful deed/And all th' glory loves to tell/Of specious gifts material"—that city no longer exists. But the one that has risen in its place retains a vestigial restlessness, an unrelieved pragmatism and worldliness that can be unnerving. I watched Byrne campaign one day outside an old church on the Northwest side, in a neighborhood founded by Swedes, which then turned German, then Polish; now it is mostly Puerto Rican. The church seems to be collapsing, but it still dominates the neighborhood, and looking at its towering steeple I was astonished to see, halfway up, an enormous clock, keeping perfect time. Religious folk tell us that a steeple is Man's arm reaching for God. And if Forster sensed all types of dubiousness, who's going to argue? In Chicago a school boy drops out, but carries a New Testament in his hip pocket; the counterman sells a red hot, but it's on a croissant with Dijon; Man stretches his arm toward heaven, but keeps his eye on his wristwatch. □

You deserve a factual look at. . .

Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank")

Whom does it belong to? Is it "occupied territory"?

Many even otherwise well-informed people believe that the turmoil in the Middle East is due to the Israeli "occupation" of Judea and Samaria, also known as the "West Bank"—a territory less than half the size of Los Angeles County.

What are the facts?

■ Jews have been living in all parts of "Palestine" since Biblical times. After World War I, Britain was in control of Palestine. Earlier, in 1917, it had issued the Balfour Declaration. It called for the establishment in Palestine of a "national home for the Jewish people", with the understanding that the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish community needed to be respected.

■ Until Jewish immigration into "Palestine" began in earnest early in this century, the country was sparsely populated and underdeveloped (Mark Twain describes the desolation well in his book *Innocents Abroad*.) Its civilization was that of the Middle Ages. When the Jews came into the country, they created commercial, agricultural, and industrial opportunities which acted as a magnet to the Arabs, most of them nomadic.

■ In 1920, the League of Nations made Britain the mandatory power in Palestine, effective in 1922. The Mandate, in line with the Balfour Declaration, provided for the establishment of a Jewish national home in all or any part of Palestine. The British, in violation of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate, divided the country in two parts. They granted the area east of the Jordan River to the Hashemite tribes, thus excluding it from Jewish settlement. They limited the Jewish National Home to the 23% remaining west of the Jordan River. That entire area is about half the size of San Barnardino County in California. Transjordan was given independence by Britain in 1946.

■ Israel declared its independence in April of 1948, on the same day as Britain relinquished its Mandate, and after the Arabs had rejected a partition plan proposed by the United Nations, which Israel had accepted.

■ In its War of Independence, against overwhelming odds, the newly-formed Israel Defense Forces in what must be considered almost a Biblical miracle, were able to defeat five combined Arab armies. Transjordan, however, succeeded in pushing westward across the Jordan River and in occupying Judea and Samaria. *They* were the occupiers, and they stayed in that occupation until they attacked Israel in 1967 and were defeated in the Six-Day War. During its 19 years of occupation, Transjordan, now renamed "Jordan", systematically removed all Jews from the territory. Jewish holy places were profaned and destroyed.

■ Israel has administered Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") since 1967. Approximately 60,000 Israelis have settled there. The Arab population in the area enjoys local autonomy, civil liberties, free access to higher education, and the highest standard of living of any Arab population anywhere in the countries neighboring on Israel.

■ A homeland for Arab Palestinians? Of course, they deserve one. They have such a country. It's Jordan. Jordan (77% of the British Mandate) is Arab Palestine, just as Israel is Jewish Palestine. Never in history has there been an Arab state in Judea and Samaria, and there certainly was never any mention of it during the 19 years of Transjordanian occupation. King Hussein himself has said: "The truth is that Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan."

In the almost 20 years of its administration, Israel has refrained from re-annexing its old provinces of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"). In the Camp David Accords, Israel committed itself to autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the area and to the determination of a permanent political status. Israel has invited representatives of Jordan and of the Arab inhabitants of Judea-Samaria to participate in autonomy talks. But, under pressure and threats of the PLO and Arab rejections, they have so far refused to participate in any negotiations. Peace, and the ultimate resolution of the problem of the "West Bank" can only come about by negotiations. Israel has been ready for such negotiations for almost 20 years.

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EDITORIAL
(continued from page 11)

tounding as this diatribe was, Mr. Churkin's style was even more primitive. He bullied the TV anchorman, and when the anchorman questioned me Mr. Churkin answered for me. Fortunately, ABC's Soviet takeover of America had yet to be consummated, so I could outshout Mr. Churkin with impunity. About the time that I notified him that "Amerika" could have displeased him more—it could have been titled "Czechoslovakia, 1968"—his satellite connection with us broke mysteriously and we were left to contemplate the new Soviet "openness."

Perhaps, as Mr. Gorbachev declared last month, "the broad democratization of our society is irreversible." But for now it is apparent that democratization means something different to him than to us. Owing to enormous inefficiencies and to corruption within the Soviet state, Mr. Gorbachev wants to invigorate his economy and to assuage the social problems now plaguing it. That does not mean that the Soviet Union will become a free society or even a friendly one. If it were to become a friendly society it would not oppose, as Mr. Gorbachev strenuously does, SDI, a purely defensive weapons system. Americans will have to be patient with our Soviet friends. □

CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 9)

I'm glad to know I was "literally correct" on the points she mentions. True, she did say that female draftees would never see combat. The trouble was, this wasn't what feminist lawyers were saying during the ERA fight, as she notes in her book. True, she did say the ERA would help homemakers in the long run. She has a complex argument on this, and I guess from her perspective it's a persuasive one. But in the heat of battle over the ERA, a lot of homemakers felt threatened by the amendment and its advocates. One reason was that feminists usually treat homemakers with disdain, as if their integrity as women and human beings is hurled into doubt by their decision to stay home. If you don't believe me, ask any homemaker about the vibes she gets from feminists. Highly negative vibes, I'll bet she will tell you. From Mansbridge's standpoint, I suppose the worst thing I could say at this point is that I agree with her about no-fault divorce. Sorry, but I do. It's a terrible idea. And I'm also sorry to add that nothing Mansbridge now says takes away from the fact that she's written a fair, honest, trenchant book. She'll just have to learn to live with that.

Finn Angler

With a single intemperate sentence in [the Correspondence section of] your February issue, Chester E. Finn, Jr., stultifies most of his own life's work. In response to a letter writer's argument that "modern democracy with its one-person, one-vote popular sovereignty" undermines the conservative tenets of limited government and individual responsibility, Mr. Finn bluntly states, "Anyone who doesn't start with a deep and abiding affection for and belief in democracy has no standing, in my view, to participate in the conversations about 'cultural conservatism'—or about much else!"

Mr. Finn is best known, of course, as an advocate of "cultural literacy," which I had assumed meant reading carefully and taking seriously the central thinkers of the Western tradition. My assumption must have been wrong, though, for hardly any of these figures had anything resembling "a deep and abiding affection for and belief in democracy" (and some of those who did, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, found this affection compatible with totalitarian sentiments). Why, then, allow them a place in our "conversations"?

I can think of three possible ways to resolve this seeming contradiction:

1. Mr. Finn may actually wish to discard all the nondemocratic thinkers of the past, thus rendering "cultural literacy" ever so much easier to acquire. A fairly diligent undergraduate should require no more than a semester or so, I think, to read every extant word written before 1900 by every human being who was possessed of "a deep and abiding affection for and belief in democracy."

2. Alternatively, Mr. Finn may not take dead authors quite so seriously as those of his own generation. "Cultural literacy" may be a mere aesthetic accomplishment, the *ideas* of the past having been superseded by an enlightened modernity. One does wonder, though, what grounds exist for asserting that universal literacy in a dead language of thought is one of the Republic's central needs. We may as well try to persuade modern scientists to study phlogiston and Ptolemaic astronomy.

3. Finally, Mr. Finn may simply be so fearful of the destructive consequences of intramural bickering among conservatives (*vide* his piece in your November 1986 issue) that he declines to argue at all—and hurls bulls of excommunication instead.

In my own opinion (which I mention only in the hope of satisfying Mr. Finn's criteria for "standing"), democratic government has worked well in America and deserves conservative support. That support should not, however, deteriorate into uncritical fundamentalism. Not only do democratic principles sometimes clash with civilization and liberty, but democracies often seem incapable of self-preservation. Conservative democrats need to face these problems openly. Perhaps Mr. Finn, in a less agitated moment, will be amenable to doing so.

—Edward Thomas Veal
Alexandria, Virginia

Chester E. Finn, Jr. replies:

Mr. Veal uses exactly the same arguments as do senior government officials in the Peoples Republic of China, which nation I just visited for the first time, in explaining why democracy is ill-suited to their land and vice versa. Having convinced themselves of this, they proceed to do all sorts of unsavory things to college students, university professors, and even government officials who persist in pressing for greater freedom, for more rights, for multi-candidate elections, and for other of the trappings and accoutrements of democracy.

It's not just in China. Throughout the totalitarian and authoritarian nations of the world—a far larger set, let us bear in mind, than the democratic nations—Mr. Veal's arguments and reasoning are accepted, at least by those in power, and deployed to forestall motion toward democracy.

While Mr. Veal surely has the right to possess, even to utter, these lamentable opinions, I have to say that it makes me sad and slightly nauseous to see them emanating from an American.

Yes, Mr. Veal, I do fervently and permanently believe that cultural conservatism presupposes a deep and relentless ardor for democracy. If that conviction on my part "stultifies" my "life's work" in the eyes of you and others who may share your blighted worldview, that is a price I gladly pay.

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CURRENT WISDOM

Nation

When an anti-abortion zealot appears complete with anti-abortion literature in front of the offices of our favorite asylum, Miss Katha Pollitt, a *Nation* hireling, confronts the scoundrel and lives to tell about it:

Although Ramon is uncomfortable when asked personal questions, the invasiveness of his own behavior is lost on him. Someone who thinks he is saving lives can, of course, persuade himself to overlook just about anything, but there is something voyeuristic and creepy about the way he sizes women up, approaching this young, fertile, dark-skinned one, ignoring that middle-aged, menopausal, white one. There are many things I found repellent about Ramon, but what outraged me most was that he felt entitled to see women's bodies—my body, which by the way, he did not consider pamphlet material when I walked by as a stranger—as reproductive objects, wombs on legs.

[January 24, 1987]

Village Voice

Trying to make sense of the Reagan 1980s, a *Village Voice* egghead posits all over again the efficacy of a miracle:

They are think tanks and foundations and they account for Reaganism's heft and deft, the economic ideas (such as they've been), the strategic initiatives, the administration's ability to find ideologically suitable staffers. If we mention Reaganism at all in the same breath as the New Deal, it's because of these new institutions, which were never available to Nixon and Republicans of long ago. But the right-wing counter-establishment is strangely limited. On its own it could never have captured Washington. Right-wing thought hardly dominates the 1980s the way left-wing thought dominated the 1930s. An ordinary right-wing politician could never have led the new organizations to spectacular double landslide triumphs. The right-wing movement was able to conquer only one way: by attaching itself to a miracle candidate, a once-in-history vote-getter.

[January 20, 1987]

Washington Post

A glimpse into the fevered mind of that monumental New Age pietist and nincompoop, Colman McCarthy:

What if the Mayflower Madam, the Mafia, the Ku Klux Klan or the KGB wanted a chance to recruit students at a university run by a chancellor who says he does "not defend or justify" their records? Would he provide space and tell students "to inquire about careers of their own choosing?" No, he would tell them what, with more spine and less fake liberalism, he should tell the CIA: Go to the newspaper classifieds, your help-wanted ads, and don't dare forget that a university is where we develop minds, not spies and assassins.

[January 4, 1987]

Rolling Stone

Aristotle on uppers, and after several shots of fire water:

[Justine Bateman] discourses on everything from nuclear disaster ("Let's say we're the eighth civilization . . .") to designer Donna Karan ("She has the right idea, but I'm not about to buy a $300 leotard") to Betty White ("She once said acting really isn't hard work—I mean, it's the greatest job").

Then it's Shakespeare and Picasso, who weren't always as profound as they led people to believe and "screwed up people's heads." And director David Lynch, who doesn't screw up people's heads. "Everyone goes up to David Lynch and says, 'What was *Eraserhead*, and what did it mean?' And he says, 'Nothing, I don't know. I don't know what it meant.' You can see things for what they are," says Bateman, "or read things into them."

Bateman considers herself what she calls a "mind person," as opposed to a "physical person." "You know what I mean, mind versus physical? If you think more than you work out." (Although she does that, too.)

[January 29, 1987]

U.S. News & World Report

Real-life happenings in the groves of Academe:

"Women have to play both sides of the street," notes psychologist James Webb at Ohio's Wright State University. "Gifted women have to manage their brightness and creativity but also play accepted female roles."

That's not to say all women shy away from career risks and challenges. Harvard Law School Prof. Susan Estrich, 34, took a big intellectual gamble when she staked her chances for receiving tenure on a scholarly article on rape law that began with a description of her own rape. Estrich received the appointment.

[January 26, 1987]

New York Times

In the very week that former president Jimmy Carter asked an increasingly uneasy Houston audience—

"How many of those little black kids does it take to equal one Amy? Fifteen? Twenty? Ten? Five? I think the answer is one. But it's hard for me to believe this," Carter said.

—the learned neoliberal fabulist, Professor Doktor Amitai Etzioni of George Washington University, asseverates:

Jimmy Carter, where are you now that we need you? What we need now is a rerendering of your "malaise" speech. Maybe a whole series of them. . . . What we need most is public leaders who will not lull us with soothing but baseless optimism, but who instead will be capable of seeing the world the way it is so we can learn to cope with it. It may be too early to bring Mr. Carter back, but how about some of his speeches.

[February 16, 1987]

Center Magazine

The visionary Dr. Margarita Melville, Professor of Chicano Studies at the University of California's Berkeley campus, tantalizes with suggestions of the cosmic good sure to come if only our President would take a walk with a Nicaraguan bank robber:

Melville: I sometimes wonder if there could ever be a summit at which all the presidents of the Americas could meet on an equal basis with mutual respect. We are always seeing news pictures of President Reagan walking side-by-side with French President Francois Mitterrand, or with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, or with prime ministers of other nations. Do we ever see President Reagan walking side-by-side with Latin American leaders? Consider also the language used by the Reagan Administration with respect to Latin American presidents, especially Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, who has received the brunt of President Reagan's scorn.

[Jan/Feb 1987]

State University of New York Press

From a recent brochure of the venerable State University of New York Press, Professor W. B. Patwarden (present whereabouts unknown) speaks of the wild thrills awaiting all who would pursue *Jnaneshvari*, about which more in due course:

The *Jnaneshvari* is so exquisite, so beautiful, so highly poetic in its metaphors and similes, so lucid in style, so rich in fantasy, so delightful in its imagery, so sublime in tone, and so pure in taste that, not withstanding the profundity and the inevitable limitations forced upon the author whose object was to make *The Bhagavad Gita* intelligible rather than to add anything new, the reader is simply fascinated and floats rapturously on the crest of flow until all is thanks-giving and there is no thought. —*Professor W. B. Patwarden*

[undated]

Nation

More Bolshevik flumdiddle for Dr. Victor Navasky's patients:

The Reagan Administration's invention of a Soviet threat to Iran as part of its disinformation campaign to maintain the Persian Gulf war at a high level of mutual destruction is typical of what has been U.S. policy and practice throughout the world during the entire history of the cold war. The nightmare of Soviet tanks clanking through the Brandenburg Gate and overrunning Western Europe is the myth on which NATO was built. The fear that Communist hordes with Chinese faces could hop across the Pacific to San Diego if allowed to conquer South Vietnam provided the rationale for America's Twenty Years' War in Asia. Lately we have heard that if the *contras* do not overthrow the government of Nicaragua, Sandinistas will soon be in Harlingen, Texas.

[January 24, 1987]

New Republic

Further chaotic ejecta from the mind of Henry Fairlie, who according to statisticians at the American Society of Clinical Pathologists has been soundly sozzled for the past 13 years without respite:

Every European points out that Americans are the most round-shouldered people in the world. Few of them carry themselves with an upright stance, although a correct stance and gait is the first precondition of letting your lungs breathe naturally and deeply.

[January 5-12, 1987]

New York Times

In bowing out of the race for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination, the Hon. Mario Cuomo serves up more of that eerie whimwham with which New Age politicos wow the press:

I have been accused of spending too much time at the desk. That's the way I am. Each of us carries his own life form, an indeterminable form that cannot be superseded by any other. You are what you are.

[February 21, 1987]

Simon and Schuster

In booming Dr. Kinsley's impending *Curse of the Giant Muffins and Other Washington Maladies*, a beleaguered copywriter at Simon and Schuster yokes the pish to the posh and the flap to the doodle with Herculean skill:

Here comes the hottest young columnist in Washington, Michael Kinsley, editor of the *New Republic* and author of its celebrated TRB column. "Michael Kinsley combines high intelligence with high spirits. The result is more than just readable, it is required reading," says George Will. With pieces that are clever, knife-edged, and right on course, Kinsley has earned a reputation, says *New York* magazine, as "perhaps the best current practitioner of Washington political writing as hip essay." Richard Reeves says Kinsley "writes common sense uncommonly well. He's one of the best."

In this marvelous book we get to see Kinsley at his comic and perceptive best. Whether he's puncturing Lee Iacocca, Peter Ueberroth, and Ralph Nader or dissecting William Safire, Michael Jackson, and Mary Cunningham . . . whether he's lamenting the proliferation of state lotteries ("all the genius of American marketing applied to tempting previously sane citizens into wasting their money") . . . or commenting wryly on the flowering of reverse reverse discrimination ("Compassion, Reagan Style: affirmative action for the rich"), he demonstrates an angle of vision that is unlike any other.

Smart, scintillating, and simply hilarious, Kinsley, who was editor of *Harper's* when it won the National Magazine Award, establishes here bona fide credentials as the H. L. Mencken of our day . . .

[Spring/Summer Catalogue, 1987]

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Within days of the Chernobyl accident I warned my 6,000 readers:

Do not drink more than 63,000 gallons of rain water!

My name is Petr Beckmann. I am Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering at the University of Colorado, and I publish a pro-science, pro-technology, pro-free enterprise monthly newletter, *Access to Energy.*

As for those 63,000 gallons, my readers know **why** they are safe. I don't ask them to trust and parrot me, I ask them to think.

In this case, I told them how much radioactive iodine 131 is given to a *healthy* patient in a thyroid check (a cancer patient is given much more): up to 90 microcuries. And I reported the maximum measured activity in rainwater washing out Chernobyl's iodine over the US: 0.00036 microcuries per liter. There's about 4 liters to the gallon; hence 63,000 gallons of "contaminated" rain water "full of fall-out" will give you as much radioactive iodine as you get when you have your thyroid checked.

Does that tiny grain of knowledge make you feel good?

It should, because America's news media and largest periodicals don't have it.

They work by the T&P (trust and parrot) method. They may difffer in whom to trust and parrot; but they share a common inability to evaluate. They will find two opposing viewpoints and manufacture a "controversy;" for they think objectivity lies halfway between the truth and a lie. (Remember how they brought in the Union of Concerned Scientists and other phonies to question the "official assurances of no health dangers"?)

Were you fed the media fixation that Chernobyl was a "meltdown"? *Access to Energy* informed its readers why the Soviets would have thanked their lucky stars if a meltdown had been all they had on their hands.

Access to Energy readers have known for many years that the Soviets do not have containment buildings, for they are more troublesome to build than making new Ukranians; but readers also know why containment buildings are merely safety measures preventing consequences *after* things have gone wrong. And readers were informed why certain things, such as the Chernobyl accident, cannot happen in America: they are not prevented by safety equipment, but by physical laws.

Access to Energy pointed out *at the time* that the Three Mile Island accident would cost more than one life per week: not-from any radiation, but in the fuel cycle of the *substitute* power, mostly coal-fired, that had to be brought in to replace the safer and healthier way of generating electric power.

In the Chernobyl accident, *Access to Energy* pointed out how easy it will be for the Soviets to cover up the deaths from radiation sickness and delayed cancers, and why they will not even bother to dilute contaminated wheat with grain from elsewhere. "A little cesium and strontium will give the Russians a more varied diet: like Markey, Solarz, Schroeder, and the other antinuclear breast-beaters in Congress, the Soviets care only about *visible* deaths."

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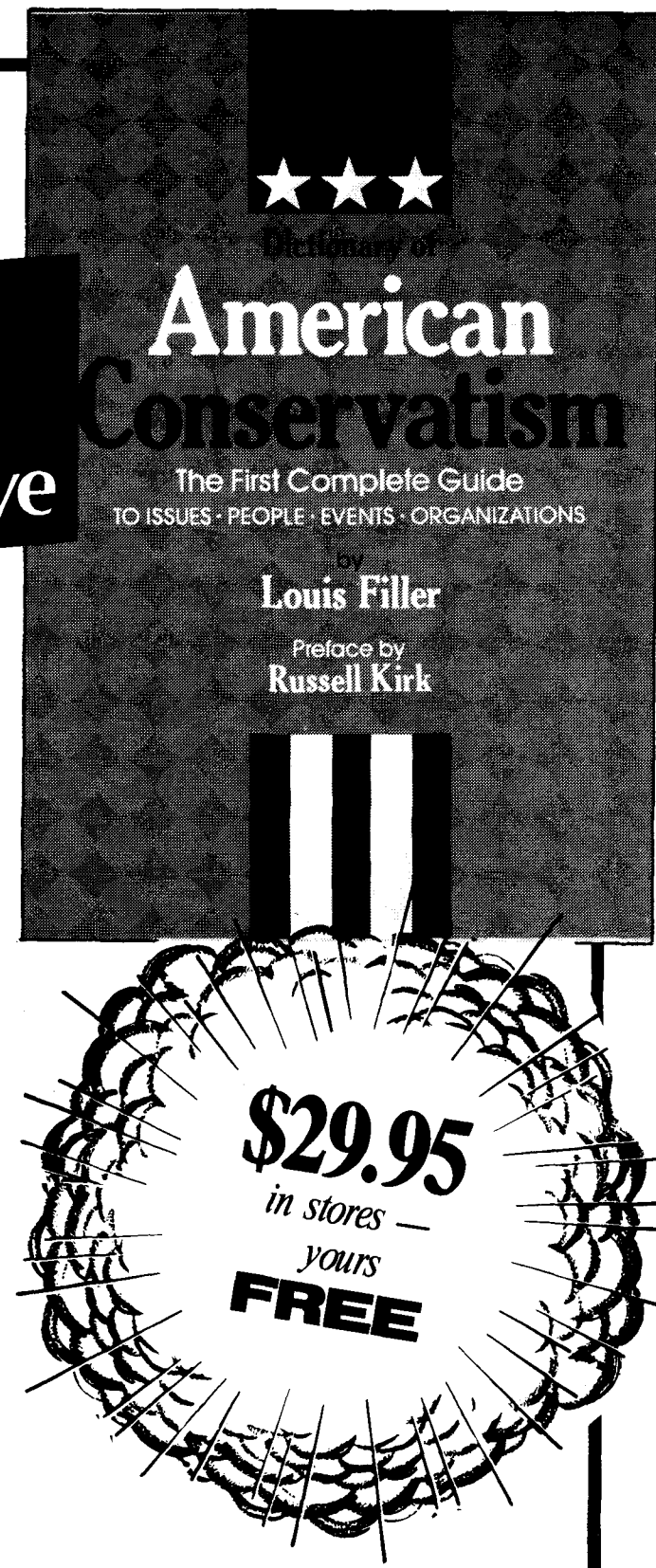

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